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In the Toils of War: Andrew Johnson and the Federal Occupation of Tennessee, 1862-1865

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Edwin T. Hardison entitled "In the Toils of War: Andrew Johnson and the Federal Occupation of Tennessee, 1862-1865." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

Ralph W. Haskins, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

LeRoy P. Graf, John Muldowny, Jonathan G. Utley, Nathalia Wright

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

IN THE TOILS OF WAR: ANDREW JOHNSON AND THE FEDERAL OCCUPATION OF TENNESSEE, 1862-1865

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Edwin T. Hardison

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of Andrew Johnson of Tennessee and his efforts to restore his adopted state to the Union amidst the agony of civil war and the cataclysm of social revolution. Frustrated in his efforts to prevent the upheaval of secession, the southern Democrat supported the war policies of Abraham Lincoln, first in the Senate and later as military governor of Tennessee. The military governments, created by the Republican executive, partially to maintain the presidential prerogative in reconstruction and partially as an expedient means of administering captured territory, proved to be a source of infinite conflict (and, except for Tennessee, little practical value in all other states) where their use was attempted. Whatever success Johnson enjoyed as war-time governor of Tennessee may be traced directly to his own obstinate determination to carry out his assignment, his not inconsiderable political skills, the fortunes of war, and the generous support of the Illinois rail splitter.

This dissertation focuses upon Andrew Johnson's tenure in the Tennessee provisional government, his problems with unreconstructed rebel leaders, contrite Confederate soldiers, and uncooperative Federal commanders (whom he often bested), and finally, his successful collaboration with Abraham Lincoln. It concludes with an analysis of the other Lincoln military governments, notably North Carolina, Louisiana, and Arkansas, and compares Johnson's generally more successful administration with those efforts of his less skillful contemporaries.

PREFACE

In 1888, Hugh McCulloch, onetime secretary of the treasury to the seventeenth president, published memoirs in which he warmly commended the former chief executive. "No public man in the United States has been so imperfectly understood as Andrew Johnson," he observed. Alas, but there was a reason. "None has been so difficult to understand."[1] Although with all due modesty, the present writer must avoid the claim that he has reached a perfect understanding of the Tennessee plebeian, he does hope to offer some new insight into the career of this beguiling historical character.

This is a study of Andrew Johnson of Tennessee and his efforts to restore his adopted state to the Union amidst the agony of civil war and the cataclysm of social revolution. Frustrated in his efforts to prevent the upheaval of secession, the southern Democrat supported the war policies of Abraham Lincoln, first in the Senate and later as military governor of Tennessee. The military governments, created by the Republican chief executive, partially to maintain the presidential prerogative in reconstruction and partially as an expedient means of administering captured territory, proved to be a source of infinite conflict (and, except for Tennessee, little practical value in all other states) where their use was attempted.

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[1] Hugh McCulloch, Men and Measures of Half a Century (New York, 1888), 369.

Andrew Johnson has always been a controversial figure. A man of genuine intelligence, rare political intuition, raw courage, and intimidating honesty, the East Tennessean scrambled his way up from a tailor's bench to the marble halls of Congress and ultimately to the splendid misery of the White House. In so doing he demonstrated an unsurpassing ability to gather enemies and engender hostility in those who disagreed with his unswerving course. Like many others of his generation, he bore the marks of his plebeian birth proudly and even defiantly. An apostle of Andrew Jackson, he surely compensated for his lowly origins by extolling the virtues of the common man, the tiller of the soil, and the mechanic of the shop.

In his rise from the rude village tailor shop to the councils of power, the Tennessean sharpened the stump-proven skills of political discourse, declamation, debate, and diatribe. By the time he succeeded the murdered Lincoln, the Greeneville politician scarcely had a peer in the art of mesmerizing a crowd or pillorying an opponent. Denounced by his enemies as a demagogue and a rabble-rouser, he relentlessly pursued his ambitious rise to national prominence.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, he was the only southern senator to keep his seat. Johnson supported the Lincoln administration and earned the appointment of military governor when Federal forces restored portions of Tennessee to the national flag.

Perceived by his opponents as a dangerous leveler or agrarian, Andrew Johnson was hardly the village rustic or political accident that they might claim. Instead, he emerged as a consummate national

politician, boldly ambitious and widely respected. Newspapers rarely had to identify him other than "Andy Johnson of Tennessee." Their readers well understood who he was. Critics might ridicule his lack of education but a careful reading of his writings and speeches reveals a reasonable command of phrases and allusions from the classics and ancient histories. During the Civil War, no one, except perhaps an Abraham Lincoln, could draw a crowd like the Tennessee plebeian. If his language was often coarse or even ungrammatical, his audiences did not seem to mind and friendly newspaper reporters either generously corrected his mistakes or his errors have been overstated. Most so-called "verbatim" accounts of his utterances reveal perhaps fewer assaults on the English language than a typical history seminar paper.[2] True, Johnson's hurried letters and dispatches often betrayed careless lapses of orthography, errant punctuation, and inventive sentence structure. However, refinement in language was hardly a virtue in rural East Tennessee where his supporters judged him on his skills rather than his flaws. The former Greeneville tailor more than compensated for his lack of formal education by his quick mind, biting repartee, verbal logic, and mastery of the issues. Although some might regard him an outsider, Johnson became a dominant figure in

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[2]Even Hans L. Trefousse, a Brooklyn College Civil War and Cold War scholar with more admiration for the radicals than the Tennessean, found that Johnson prepared carefully for his "extemporaneous" speeches. Johnson partisan Hugh McCulloch remembered also that the tailor-stateman's written addresses were well composed and dignified. Hans L. Trefousse, Impeachment of a President: Andrew Johnson, the Blacks, and Reconstruction (Knoxville, 1975), 209n-10n; McCulloch, Men and Measures, 374.

Tennessee politics in the turbulent years before the Civil War and quickly established himself as the "political boss" of the state in the secession crisis. When Lincoln began channeling patronage through the East Tennessean, his old political adversaries were enraged, but Andy remained in charge.

Stubborn to the point of obstinacy, sensitive to slights, and work-driven even at the sacrifice of his family life, the Tennessean ultimately misjudged his own limitations and the extent of loyal sentiment. Johnson undertook the military government, believing that he could persuade his fellow Tennesseans to return to their old allegiance. He well understood the uses of publicity and cultivated editors and journalists friendly to his cause. Should a Don Carlos Buell try to abandon Nashville in the face of a Confederate threat, Andy Johnson knew how to bring the commander to his senses. The governor simply threatened to interpose his own official person between the rebel army and the city. No general could survive that kind of notoriety.

Johnson's relations with official Washington always revealed his grasp of the larger issues of the war. Although he meddled shamelessly in command decisions, he correctly understood the importance of severing Confederate communications and relieving East Tennessee. Likewise, he wondered why the Confederate army could move and subsist on the countryside while the Federal forces seemed tied to the railroad. The president and military governor apparently recognized the other's worth and treated each other with respect,

although there was certainly no obsequiousness in the Tennessean's dispatches to the commander-in-chief. Quite the contrary. Unawed by the rail splitter, the former tailor was not hesitant in giving advice, questioning decisions, and otherwise placing his own imprimatur on the restoration of Tennessee.

What of the historical record? What have others said about the Tennessee plebeian and his rise to national prominence? Like the general subject of reconstruction, the various historical works dealing with Andrew Johnson are tinged by prevailing patterns of presentism. Illustrating the persistent scars of the Civil War, such historians have found it almost impossible to avoid using the past as a tool to promote contemporary fashionable social, economic, and political ideas. Johnson was president and still a viable political figure when complimentary biographies began appearing.[3] Two friendly journalists penned heroic portraits, emphasizing his remarkable rise from the tailor shop to the White House. Depicting the Tennessean as a pre-eminent tribune of the people, Frank Moore, the editor of an encyclopedic work on the Civil War, sandwiched details of Johnson's life between a collection of his speeches in a book hastily pasted together for the political market. John Savage, an Irish-born War Democrat, well-traveled journalist, and author of two previous campaign biographies (1860 and 1864), professed "a profound admiration" for

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[3]Portions of the following historiographical analysis are drawn from Willard Hays, "Andrew Johnson's Reputation," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 31 (1959), 1-31 and No. 32 (1960), 18-50; Albert Castel, The Presidency of Andrew Johnson (Lawrence, Kan., 1979), 218-30.

the Tennessean whose patriotic efforts "gradually mellowed down the rebellious sentiment" and restored thousands to their former allegiances.[4] Had the unfortunate president been spared the conflict with the radicals and avoided the carnival of impeachment, such noble character sketches would have been valuable campaign documents in 1868.

Within a few years of his involuntary retirement, Johnson's Republican critics were recording their own version of the Civil War and reconstruction, including highly partisan portraits of the former president. A leading radical, Henry Wilson, vice president in Grant's second term and a prominent Massachusetts senator during the impeachment crisis, published the final volume of his History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America in 1877. According to the Republican politico, the Tennessean was a dishonest, treacherous, and arrogant obstructionist.[5] Echoing similar sentiments, the Republican incarnate, James G. Blaine, unsuccessful presidential candidate in 1884, described Johnson as obstinate and conceited, but overly sensitive about his poor white origins. In his recollections of two decades of Congress, the "man from Maine" took his party's vengeance on the Democrat who dared to challenge "the wisdom and righteousness

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[4]Frank Moore, Speeches of Andrew Johnson, President of the United States (Boston, 1865), viii-xi, xxv; John Savage, The Life and Public Services of Andrew Johnson: Seventeenth President of the United States (New York, 1866), 3, 5, 284.

[5]Henry Wilson, History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America (3 vols., Boston, 1872-77), III, 578, 596-97, 733-34.

of the Republican policy."[6] With the exception of McCulloch's appreciative Men and Measures of Half a Century (1888), this unflattering portrait of the tailor-politician was not seriously altered until the turn of the century.

The Reverend Mr. James S. Jones, a local Methodist minister and admirer of the late plebeian, with access to the former president's papers, refurbished Johnson's image, devoting several dozen pages to the provisional government and extolling the heroic restoration of the state.[7] A more scholarly account appeared in David Miller DeWitt's examination of the impeachment trial wherein he saw a struggle between a noble giant and Lilliputians. Reflecting the national change of heart toward reconstruction and the Negro, DeWitt, who had also used the Johnson records, applauded the president's determination and the eventual effacement of "the Africanized rotten boroughs."[8]

Despite such sincere efforts to rehabilitate the Tennessean, his historical reputation continued to suffer. An Ohio Republican, James Ford Rhodes, undertook a massive, multi-volume account of the Civil War and its aftermath, finding the seventeenth president

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[6]James G. Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress (2 vols., Norwich, Conn., 1884-86), II, 304-6.

[7]James S. Jones, Life of Andrew Johnson: Seventeenth President of the United States (Greeneville, Tenn., 1901), 3, 76-134. According to his grandson, the Reverend Mr. Jones was the pastor of the Greeneville Methodist Church and later preached at the funeral of Johnson's daughter, Martha J. Patterson. Conversation with David J. Harkness, Knoxville, Tennessee, September 2, 1981.

[8]David Miller DeWitt, The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson: Seventeenth President of the United States: A History (New York, 1903), v, 625, 627.

"ill-fitted" for the task of reconstruction. Although he regarded the radical treatment of the South as immoral and unconstitutional, Rhodes believed that the Democratic president was his own worst enemy.[9] A northerner's version of the Johnson story was followed by two southern accounts, each written from a different frame of reference.

A Johnson contemporary, lawyer Oliver P. Temple, an East Tennessee Whig and later a Republican, wrote several historical works dealing with the Civil War and the personalities of that period. When Lincoln made Johnson military governor, the former tailor, a veritable "imperial ruler" wielded, in Temple's view, almost unlimited authority, including the "right of pulling down and setting up." The aged Republican mused that his old adversary was driven by hubris. The desire to be elected president "overrode, and, at times, quieted all other passions, even hate and revenge."[10]

While Rhodes and Temple were not professional historians, their interpretation would be repeated by a southern academician. A Columbia University historian and political scientist, John W. Burgess was born into a Tennessee slaveholding family but professed to having a northern outlook on the Civil War. Burgess regarded Andrew Johnson as a patriotic, but stubborn, mean-spirited commoner, unfit for the

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[9]James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 (7 vols., New York, 1893-1906), V, 519, 589.

[10]Oliver P. Temple, Notable Men of Tennessee from 1833 to 1875 (New York, 1912), 402, 406-18, 422.

responsibilities given him.[11] The Columbia historian's work was supplemented by one of his brightest students, William A. Dunning, who used the Johnson papers which had been sold to the Library of Congress in 1904. Like his mentor, Dunning, also a Columbia University professor, perceived a headstrong and politically artless president, following the right path but using the wrong methods.[12]

In 1913, James Schouler, a Harvard lawyer and legal scholar, sought to vindicate the "truly remarkable" Tennessee politician. In the seventh volume of a major historical narrative of the United States from revolution through reconstruction, the politically conservative Schouler condemned the radical administration of the South. Nevertheless, he admitted that the tailor-statesman was tactless and unwise in his relations with Congress.[13]

In 1916 Clifton R. Hall, a professional historian, published a well-balanced critical study that remains today one of the standard works on Andrew Johnson's provisional government. Hall made extensive use of the Johnson manuscripts as well as the war department's recently published official records of the Civil War and other primary sources. Remarkably, this delineation of the Tennessean would

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[11] Michael Kraus, The Writing of American History (Norman, Okla., 1953), 202-3; John W. Burgess, Reconstruction and the Constitution, 1866-1876 (New York, 1902), 31-41, 191-92.

[12] Kraus, Writing of American History, 305-7; William A. Dunning, Reconstruction: Political and Economic, 1865-1877 (New York, 1907), 35-38, 43, 58-61.

[13] Kraus, Writing of American History, 198-202; James Schouler, History of the United States of America Under the Constitution (7 vols., New York, 1880-1913), VII, 1-61, 142.

anticipate some of the revisionist and neo-radical histories of the 1960's and 1970's. "His mind was narrow, bigoted, uncompromising, suspicious; his nature solitary and reticent; his demeanor coldly repellant or violently combative." On the other hand, the scholar conceded that the governor performed meritoriously in "a position which would have been insupportable by any man less self-sufficient, grim, impervious--one is tempted to say, less fanatical--than he."[14]

The pro-Johnson historiographical revolution exploded in the late 1920's and early 1930's. In 1928, Robert W. Winston, a North Carolina lawyer and judge, published a complete biography. The next year, another lawyer, New Yorker Lloyd Paul Stryker, offered a study of the tailor. That same year, a Democratic orator, journalist, and sometime ambassador, Claude G. Bowers, followed Winston, Stryker, and the Dunning school by castigating the radicals for their aggressions against a prostrate South and an embattled president. By the time George Fort Milton and Howard K. Beale added their separate analyses of Johnson and the radicals in 1930, a major watershed in historical writing had occurred. Certainly the most influential of all the pro-Johnson studies was Beale's The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction. Infused with Frederick Jackson Turner's economic determinism, Beale cited the radical program for reconstructing the South as a dark conspiracy of northern capitalism to consummate its military victory over the agrarian Confederacy. Although differing

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[14]Clifton R. Hall, Andrew Johnson: Military Governor of Tennessee (Princeton, 1916), 218, 222-23.

in style, approaches, and specific interpretations, Beale and the other Johnson advocates glorified the Tennessean, portraying him as a humane, intelligent, and courageous constitutionalist, valiantly battling a vindictive, reckless group of arrogant ideologues. In short, rather than an obstinate, vulgar place-seeker, the southerner emerged as an enlightened man of the people.[15] This dour interpretation of radical reconstruction and the countervailing positive view of Johnson remained undisturbed until the civil rights movement, which would be sparked by the Supreme Court's Brown versus Board of Education decision in 1954.

In 1956, Professor David Donald, while at Columbia University, in the midst of researching his later study of Charles Sumner, published an article, "Why They Impeached Andrew Johnson," in American Heritage. The Mississippi-born Civil War era specialist, although admitting that the radicals' formal accusations were specious, found neither "misguided sentimentality nor vindictiveness" in the Republican opposition. Yet "Andrew Johnson must be impeached with an even graver charge--that through political ineptitude he threw away a magnificent opportunity."[16]

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[15]Robert W. Winston, Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot (New York, 1928), 513-19; Lloyd Paul Stryker, Andrew Johnson: A Study in Courage (New York, 1929), 193-243; Claude G. Bowers, The Tragic Era: The Revolution after Lincoln (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), 44; George Fort Milton, The Age of Hate: Andrew Johnson and the Radicals (Hamden, Conn., 1965 [1930]), 120-21; Howard K. Beale, The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction (New York, 1958 [1930]), ix, 225-99.

[16]David Donald, "Why They Impeached Andrew Johnson," American Heritage, VIII (1956), 103.

Donald's strictures heralded a new, massive assault on the reputation of the tailor-politician. Sensitive to Thaddeus Stevens' battles for black progress, especially in the area of education and voting rights ("a special timeliness now"), in 1959 U.C.L.A. historian Fawn M. Brodie scorned the Tennessean for believing that "the old southern paternalist tradition was perfectly adequate to secure the colored man justice." In her widely-acclaimed biography of Thaddeus Stevens, the architect of the Fourteenth Amendment and chief Johnson prosecutor, Brodie treated the former tailor as a tactless, sometimes foolish, and seemingly politically self-destructive demagogue, who "as military governor had shown himself to be very tender of the property rights of the Tennessee slave-holders."[17] Brodie's bold rendering was followed by an even more influential revision.

In 1960, Eric L. McKitrick, a latter day Columbia University reconstruction scholar, unveiled a more ambitious, original, and highly critical appraisal of Andrew Johnson than had appeared in decades. Describing the Tennessean as "a lone wolf," a party "maverick, operating out on the fringe of things," the Michigan native found him wanting in temperament and political sagacity, a studied contrast to Abraham Lincoln. A humorless, abstract-thinking, dogmatic, radical Jacksonian and constitutional fundamentalist, Andy Johnson's "finest hour" was his genuinely heroic service as military governor. Nevertheless, as president, the plebeian's limitations and errors, failure of party leadership, lack of political vision, and archaic attitudes

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[17]Fawn M. Brodie, Thaddeus Stevens: Scourge of the South (New York, 1959), 10, 236, 329-35, 220.

toward the role of the Federal government disrupted "the political life of an entire nation" and "materially" blocked "the reconciliation of North and South."[18]

Whereas McKitrick's dissection of the Johnson persona had emphasized the political and social estrangement of the stubborn southerner, a husband and wife team, John H. and LaWanda Cox, attributed his actions to simple racism: "By refusing Presidential support to any program that would effectively secure equality before the law to the four million slaves whom the national government had made free, he fatally alienated the reasonable men who wished to act with him rather than against him."[19]

The same year (1963), William R. Brock, a British professor, offered his interpretation, adhering more or less to the path trod by McKitrick and the Coxes, but perhaps softening the harshness of their criticism. Brock praised the Tennessean's administrative ability, his impressive "natural dignity," his successful stewardship in "occupied Tennessee," and the qualities that would "in happier times" have made him "a successful President." Unfortunately, the southern Unionist was too stubborn, suspicious, jealous, provincial, and closed-minded to be a successful leader.[20] Brock, the Coxes, Brodie,

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[18]Eric L. McKitrick, Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction (Chicago, 1960), 85, 86, 89, 90, 507, 269-325, 14.

[19]LaWanda Cox and John H. Cox, Politics, Principle and Prejudice: 1865-1866, Dilemma of Reconstruction America (New York, 1963), viii, 203, 214, 232, 202.

[20]William R. Brock, An American Crisis: Congress and Reconstruction, 1865-1867 (London, 1963), 30-31 and passim.

and a growing chorus of revisionists in the 1960's clearly sympathized with Johnson's radical congressional enemies, regarding the president's program as inadequate, if not mischievous.[21]

In the midst of such highly charged value judgments and historical statements, David Donald called for a fresh approach to the study of Andrew Johnson and reconstruction. Rather than portraying Johnson as a doctrinaire adherent to the Constitution, Professor Donald noted that in 1864 he had openly flouted the Constitution by not only disqualifying secessionist sympathizers but also McClellan supporters with a special oath. Donald concluded that as president, "Johnson, far from showing himself a blundering politician or a temperamental 'outsider,' proved himself a virtuoso of politics." Had Johnson died in January, 1866, he would have been regarded as one of the nation's "most politically astute" chief executives.[22]

Rather than following Donald's moderate course of revisionism however, most historians took the now familiar, more extreme path, giving rise to a neo-radical school of historiography. The leading advocates included Hans L. Trefousse, Michael Perman, and Michael Les Benedict. More militant and revolutionary in their views than previous scholars, the neo-radicals attacked the plebeian for frustrating a humane and idealistic program of social advances. With

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[21]See also Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York, 1962), 533-52, 561-63, 611-13; Kenneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York, 1965), 81-82.

[22]David Donald, The Politics of Reconstruction, 1863-1867 (Baton Rouge, 1965), 9, 12-15, 21-23.

all too fresh memories of civil rights marches, sit-ins, urban riots, and assassinated liberal heroes, Trefousse damned the stubborn Tennessean for the "disastrous" consequences of the failed "social revolution." In his analysis of the defeated but uncowed South, Michael Perman observed that Johnson erroneously followed a policy of conciliation when only "a mandatory settlement enforced by an occupying army," disfranchising "the Confederacy's political elite," and granting "confiscated and abandoned lands" to the freedmen might have been successful. After reviewing Johnson's political career, Michael Les Benedict concluded that the tribune of Tennessee's poor whites was simply "a strict constructionist, economizing, Locofoco, Jacksonian Democrat," animated by "devotion to limited government," loneliness, "hostility to the southern slaveholding aristocracy," and white supremacy. Clearly sympathetic to the "moral rectitude" and ideals of the radicals, Benedict openly decried the "dull blade" of impeachment, claiming that it was the imperial Johnson, not Congress, who sought "broad new powers."[23]

Despite the impact of such studies in a period also strongly colored by contemporary issues of equal opportunity, civil unrest, war, and a fundamental conflict between Congress and the White House, the late 1960's and 1970's produced other historical and even popular renderings of the East Tennessean. Some essentially reprised Bowers,

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[23]Trefousse, Impeachment of a President, ix, 188-89 and passim; Michael Perman, Reunion Without Compromise: The South and Reconstruction, 1865-1868 (Cambridge, England, 1973), 7-12, 14, 346-47; Michael Les Benedict, The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson (New York, 1973), 4-7, 9, 180.

Milton, and Beale.[24] In describing the former military governor in a well-received work, Milton Lomask charitably asserted that as "a man of admirable character, incorruptible and patriotic," Andrew Johnson was one of the nation's "best political philosophers." However, he also concluded that the plebeian was one of "the poorest politicians" ever to reach the White House.[25]

Other scholars eschewed the moral imperatives of the neo-radicals to produce less strident, more balanced accounts of the tailor-politician. Although not necessarily sympathetic to Johnson, James E. Sefton's review of the army's role in the reconstruction process and the Tennessean's use of power avoided the recrimination of the neo-radicals. Sefton noted that although Johnson had a limited vision of the Federal government's role in economic and other matters, "he had an expansive, dynamic, Jacksonian view of the presidency as the head of both the executive branch and the party." Similarly, John Niven, in a biography, Gideon Welles: Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy (1973), depicted Johnson as a man "less rigidly moralistic, less judgemental than Welles," but seemingly "unable to distinguish his friends from his foes." Martin E. Mantell also offered a

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[24]See, for example, Lately Thomas, The First President Johnson: The Three Lives of the Seventeenth President of the United States of America (New York, 1968), 127-285, 264; Fay Warrington Brabson, Andrew Johnson: A Life in Pursuit of the Right Course, 1808-1875 (Durham, N. C., 1972), 73-111; Gene Smith, High Crimes and Misdemeanors: The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson (New York, 1977), passim.

[25]Milton Lomask, Andrew Johnson: President on Trial (New York, 1960), 345.

more detached view of the East Tennessean in a work dealing with U. S. Grant.[26]

By the late 1970's, scholars continued to re-examine the plebeian's role in the restoration process. The spirit of revisionism was apparent in Patrick W. Riddleberger's portrait of a blundering, hyper-reactionary, racist president.[27] Avoiding Riddleberger's moral imperatives, Peter Maslowski tendered a less judgmental account of Johnson as military governor in his book based on his Ohio State dissertation, suggesting that while "Lincoln acted too hastily in appointing a military governor of Tennessee," the plebeian's strong Democratic ties, his profound patriotism, and his personal courage warranted the president's consideration. "But his personality also harbored the potential for inflaming passions further and for increasing bitterness."[28] In a study prepared for the American Presidency Series, Albert Castel, a Civil War and diplomatic specialist, dismissed the neo-radicals' criticisms that the Tennessean prevented the establishment of "democracy" in the South as "nonsense." Pointing out that

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[26]James E. Sefton, The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (Baton Rouge, 1967), viii-ix, 8, 13, 164; Andrew Johnson and the Uses of Constitutional Power (Boston, 1980), 36-37, 87-102; John Niven, Gideon Welles: Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy (New York, 1973), 515; Martin E. Mantell, Johnson, Grant, and the Politics of Reconstruction (New York, 1973), 4, 14, 15.

[27]Patrick W. Riddleberger, 1866: The Critical Year Revisited (Carbondale, Ill., 1979), 6-10. Riddleberger, however, does not blame Johnson entirely, citing the misbehavior of certain radicals. Ibid., 104.

[28]Peter Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious: Military Occupation and Wartime Reconstruction in Nashville, Tennessee, 1862-1865 (Millwood, N. Y., 1978), 20-26.

the radicals' desire to redistribute the land had no real public support, he claimed the result would have been cataclysmic for all concerned, especially for the freedmen. Nevertheless, Castel concluded that Johnson's blunders and obstinacy resulted in his being "on the whole, a failure as president."[29] Thus the debate goes on.

In reality, the most authoritative and unbiased scholarship covering the pre-presidential years may be found not in a monograph, but in the various introductions to The Papers of Andrew Johnson, edited by Professors LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins. Eschewing overt political and social value judgments, the editors viewed dispassionately "the mixed cargo of assets and liabilities" that the Tennessean freighted in the Civil War years and softened the "sharply etched portrait of a grim presence, ambitious, violent," and "unforgiving."[30]

Given the controversial nature of Andrew Johnson's career, particularly in the presidential years, it seems appropriate to examine the Civil War prelude very carefully. Aside from the works by Clifton R. Hall and Peter Maslowski, there is a dearth of historical writing on the military governorship. Although Hall's dated research has a remarkably modern, revisionist tone, it still does not deal with the Tennessean's complexities to the extent warranted by the subject. Likewise, Maslowski has relied heavily on secondary sources for his

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[29]Castel, Presidency of Andrew Johnson, 228-30.

[30]LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., The Papers of Andrew Johnson (5 vols., Knoxville, 1967-), V, xxxv, xxxiv.

interpretation of the tailor-politician, and offers nothing original in analyzing the military governor. Both historians, like those eager radicals of yesterday, also have been disposed to read Johnson's rhetoric as a blueprint for action, portraying him as a doctrinaire extremist, when, in reality, the pragmatic plebeian was content to govern with a surprisingly light yoke.

This study focuses on Andrew Johnson's tenure in the Tennessee provisional government, his problems with unreconstructed rebels, his conflicts with bureaucrats and uncooperative army commanders (whom he generally bested), and his successful collaboration with Abraham Lincoln that led eventually to the White House. It concludes with an analysis of the other Lincoln military governments, notably North Carolina, Louisiana, and Arkansas, and compares Johnson's accomplishments with those of his contemporaries in these states. Aside from Robert J. Futrell's pioneering article in the early 1950's, the Federal military administrations remain "a practically virgin area of Civil War historical writing."[31]

Johnson's efforts to establish a viable administrative apparatus in the face of military reverses, rebellious civilians, and dubious political allies during the Civil War in Tennessee naturally form the underlying theme of this research effort. A secondary theme emerges out of the former slaveholder's willingness to sacrifice the peculiar institution to the cause of the Union. A third theme is embodied in

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[31]Robert J. Futrell, "Federal Military Government in the South, 1861-1865," Military Affairs, XV (1951), 181-91.

the expedient collaboration between the Tennessee governor and the president of the United States, a relationship which revealed the rail splitter's sensitivity to the considerable political clout of the former tailor. Despite all his problems, Andrew Johnson was the most successful of the military governors. Furthermore, the Tennessean's carefully cultivated image of implacable hostility toward the rebels was more apparent than real. Indeed, this writer argues that the Tennessee governor used the oath and other symbolic methods of coercion rather than more Draconian measures. So flexible was the plebeian in his dealings with the secesh (and even the gentry) that one might readily suggest that the seemingly inexplicable turnabout in the presidential years from a strident traitor-threatening radical to a forgiving dispenser of amnesty and pardons had already been anticipated in the war years in Tennessee. Moreover, Johnson's treatment of the few members of the rebel aristocracy who fell into his hands calls into question the oft-stated presumption that he was unduly motivated by class vindictiveness or social jealousies. That he made no real effort to punish secessionists, rich or otherwise, beyond a few weeks in jail for a handful of the thousands who opposed him, shows that the Tennessee military governor was no radical. Except for the desire to put down the rebellion, even at the cost of slavery, Andrew Johnson had nothing in common with Benjamin Wade, Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner, and the other extremists in the Republican camp, a circumstance which unfortunately would not be readily apparent until much too late. Finally, the research has led this writer to the conclusion that in 1864 Abraham Lincoln wanted the Tennessean on the National Union

ticket much more than his contemporaries would have admitted. By the time that he was nominated for vice president, Andrew Johnson was a man for the times.

In view of the nature of the subject, an analysis of the disintegration of the peculiar institution in war-torn Tennessee would be in order. However, a fine dissertation submitted at Ohio State University in 1977 by John V. Cimprich, Jr., has already covered this topic in a most comprehensive and scholarly fashion.[32] Cimprich depicts in exhaustive detail the destruction of slavery in Tennessee and shows how the governor gradually accepted emancipation and grudgingly tolerated military enlistment of the contrabands. Consequently, this writer's own study does not deal separately with slavery or the lot of the freedman but makes appropriate references in the context of other matters.

Although the Tennessee economy under wartime conditions might well be another appropriate topic for a monograph, Johnson's role in this area is not clearly defined and he seems to have been otherwise occupied. Therefore, this dissertation does not attempt other than passing comments on the economy. The disruption of the Tennessee labor supply, the devastation by contending armies, the military control of the transportation system, the lack of a stable currency, and the steady stream of presidential, treasury department, and military regulations, all hampered attempts to revive the economy.

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[32]John V. Cimprich, Jr., Slavery Amidst Civil War in Tennessee: The Death of an Institution (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1977).

Despite his large role in such activities as the construction of the Nashville and Northwestern Railroad, for example, Johnson tended to concentrate on military and political matters, leaving the economy to its own myriad and mysterious fluctuations.

Finally, Johnson was trapped in the Nashville and Middle Tennessee cockpit, the heartland of treason and traitors. His influence, although quite formidable, did not generally extend beyond those portions of the Federal lines encompassing the Middle Tennessee salient. Consequently, this dissertation focuses on those areas where Johnson sought to exercise jurisdiction and makes only appropriate references to Memphis, Knoxville, and other areas when necessary.

A number of institutions and individuals have assisted in the preparation of this dissertation. This writer gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the libraries of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, East Tennessee State University, Vanderbilt University, the University of North Carolina, the University of Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Old Dominion University, Emory and Henry College, Virginia Highlands Community College, and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. In addition, various individuals at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Virginia State Library and Archives, the Knoxville-Knox County Public Library, and the Bristol Public Library provided valuable aid.

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CHAPTER I

THE MIND OF THE TENNESSEE UNIONIST AND THE POLITICS OF SECESSION

On a brilliant, sunlit day in the spring of 1861, fecund with destiny, irony, and high expectations, two groups of Tennesseans, each noble in purpose and patriotic in spirit, boarded cars in different parts of the state and embarked on a great and tragic adventure. Several hours later on that night, May 1, the trains met at a quiet siding in a small Alabama station and halted alongside one another, placing the passengers for an "uncomfortably long time" in close and hostile proximity. Aboard one train was the newly organized Confederate First Tennessee volunteer infantry regiment, fresh from a flower-strewn farewell at Winchester and exhilarated by a rousing speech from their commander, Colonel Peter Turney, a leading Franklin County fire-eater. Sitting in confusion and despair just a few feet away across the siding on the other train were a group of East Tennessee Unionists, listening to the cheers for "Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy," en route to Nashville in a hopeless attempt to foil the machinations of Governor Isham G. Harris and other secessionists, already plotting the state's future. Tennessee had not yet joined the embryonic Confederacy, but the Franklin County butternuts could not wait, rejecting the mere technical subleties of state secession in favor of an early, heady, and fateful journey to the killing grounds at Manassas, Seven Days', Second Manassas, Sharpsburg, Gettysburg,

Cold Harbor, Appomattox, and a dozen other major and minor episodes soon to bloody this regiment.[1]

Fraught with irony and symbolism, this chance encounter at the rustic railroad siding in Alabama encapsulated both the agony and the exhilaration of secession. Bishop James H. Otey, a prominent Episcopal leader, bemoaned the revolution overtaking his state:

> [The] cry, like a death-knell, rings through all our borders, "The Union is dissolved! and the sun of our glory has gone down!" Ruin, with its wild shriek of despair, spreads its dark wings over all the land, and foreshadows the "desolation that cometh like a whirlwind." Every face gathers blackness, every bosom heaves a sigh, and every eye drops a tear! Well may we then, if not now, take up the lament of Christ over Jerusalem, and say, "O my country! If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."[2]

When Tennessee joined the Confederacy, the once sanguine Unionists were plunged into gloom, at last realizing that their state could not avoid the tragedy which they saw unfolding before them. In the presidential election of 1860, the popular native son, John Bell, a former Whig running on the Constitutional Union ticket, edged out the southern Democrat John C. Breckinridge and swamped the candidate of the northern Democracy, Stephen A. Douglas. The feared

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[1]Howard Hall, "Franklin County in the Secession Crisis," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XVII (1958), 37-44; Tennesseans in the Civil War: A Military History of Confederate and Union Units with Available Rosters of Personnel (2 vols., Nashville, 1964), I, 170-71; Oliver P. Temple, East Tennessee and the Civil War (Freeport, New York, 1971 [1899]), 224-26.

[2]Undated sermon, William Mercer Green, Memoir of Rt. Rev. James Hervey Otey, D. D., LL. D.: The First Bishop of Tennessee (New York, 1885), 348.

and unpredictable Abraham Lincoln received no votes.[3] The relative calm of the campaign in Tennessee convinced many observers that the state could remain aloof from the coming cataclysm that was disrupting the Union.

On December 7, Governor Harris called for the general assembly to meet in extraordinary session on Monday, January 7, 1861, to deliberate the issues raised by Lincoln's election. By the time the legislators convened the secessionists were militant and vocal but the flame of the Unionists still burned bright. South Carolina seceded in a joyous cleavage with the past and Alabama elected delegates to a state convention and then daringly seized the Federal forts commanding Mobile Bay. All along the Gulf the fire-eaters were in the saddle. Floridians imitated their rebellious neighbors and took possession of Fort Marion in St. Augustine.[4]

In Tennessee, disconsolate Unionists, awaiting the whirlwind being sown by the fire-eaters, argued that Lincoln's election was not sufficient cause to justify disruption of the Union. The Knoxville Whig, Parson William G. Brownlow, pointed to the constitutional checks and balances, the Congress, and the Supreme Court preventing any aggressive and precipitate abolitionist president.[5] Samuel Milligan, longtime Greeneville confidante and political ally of

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[3]Charles Miller, The Official and Political Manual of the State of Tennessee (Nashville, 1890), 42.

[4]E. B. Long, with Barbara Long, The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac, 1861-1865 (Garden City, New York, 1971), 9-22.

[5]Knoxville Whig, November 17, December 8, 1860.

Senator Andrew Johnson, blamed the northern fanatics for the present unhappy condition. However, secession was not the answer. "The remedy is too extreme for the disease, and more likely to kill than to cure the patient."[6]

For two days, Tennessee Senator Andrew Johnson in a dramatic, bold, and tempestuous oration held the attention of the Senate and moved its normally relaxed and often idle and quiescent galleries to spontaneous and appreciative ovations. The telegraph carried his electric denunciation of both abolitionists and secessionists throughout the republic and his speech moved him into the first rank of loyal southern leadership. Already a national figure on the basis of his persistent advocacy of homestead legislation, Johnson further embossed his political image with his dramatic, fierce, and often even eloquent appeal for the Union.

Encompassing two days, Wednesday and Thursday, December 18 and 19, 1860, in the midst of South Carolina's secession convention and on the eve of the passage of its historic ordinance severing the Union bonds, Johnson's speech represented a quintessential effort to persuade his countrymen to resolve their differences and stand by the Constitution. Invoking the legendary founding fathers, the guiding beacon, "the chief ark of our safety," and "the palladium of our civil and our religious liberty" as sustaining symbols, the senator placed his faith in the comforts and guarantees in the

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[6]Samuel Milligan to Johnson, December 13, 1860, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, III, 689-90.

Constitution. Admitting that he had opposed Lincoln and even spent his own money in a futile attempt to defeat the Republican candidate, he promised to resist all encroachments upon the hallowed institutions of his country at the threshold. "Can Mr. Lincoln send a foreign minister, or even a consul, abroad, unless he received the sanction of the Senate?" he asked. Moreover, "We got more votes in the North against Lincoln than the entire southern States cast." Like other Unionists, Johnson sought to show that Lincoln's election represented no threat to southern institutions.[7]

He also belittled the so-called right of secession, engaging in a long historical discourse, showing that Washington, Jackson, Madison, Jefferson, Clay, and Webster all denied the doctrine. Claiming that such action would be treason, and a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, he reminded his listeners that it was the duty of the government to see that the laws were faithfully executed. In this regard the Tennessee senator clearly sought to ally himself with the conservative elements, hoping that the constitutional safeguards would be flexible enough to allow a solution to emerge. Nevertheless, in a passage that many southerners probably read with interest, Johnson offered a caveat. Warning that "you must talk very delicately upon the subject of coercion," the Tennessee Unionist asserted that "I do not believe the Federal Government has the power to coerce a State." However, the central government could enforce and execute the laws upon individuals within a state. Thus Johnson

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[7] Ibid., IV, 39, 42-43.

chose to attach himself to the conservative anchors of law and order.[8]

Indeed, he scorned the northern states for their bad example. "I think the States that have passed their personal liberty bills, in violation of the Constitution of the United States, coming in conflict with the fugitive slave law, to that extent have dissolved their connection, and to that extent it is revolution." However, he argued that the northern personal liberty laws were no justification for following their example by violating the solemn compact of union. But, "shall we turn around, on the other hand, and violate the Constitution by coercing" the South?[9]

The Tennessee senator sought to find a defensible middle ground between the positions of the fire-eaters and abolitionists, regarding both as equally dangerous to the safety of the Union. However, the initial telegraphic dispatches so garbled his remarks that the tenor of his speech was seriously distorted. Secession newspapers printed excerpts that suggested that Johnson favored coercion or treating the South as "conquered provinces." The speech so enraged the fire-eaters that Johnson was burned in effigy in organized demonstrations in several cities and towns in a number of southern states, including Tennessee. Calling those immediately involved "gentlemen of true mettle," one observer noted that the burning of the senator's effigy in Knoxville was done in "a public, open, and bold manner."[10] A

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[8] Ibid., 20-23, 10.

[9] Ibid., 10.

[10] Nashville Union and American, December 25, 1860; Memphis Appeal, January 8, 1861; Knoxville Register, January 10, 1861.

Rogersville loyalist, recently returning from Tuscumbia, Alabama, observed a Johnson effigy on display near that place. "I saw him hanging on the telegraph lines." Although never a Johnson supporter, "I felt like pulling him down--& would have done it if I had . . . the power."[11]

At this critical juncture in the nation's history the man and the moment seemed in fateful rendezvous.[12] Born in Raleigh, North Carolina, on December 29, 1808, Andrew Johnson spent his early years in grinding and obscure poverty, reportedly so abject that "at one year of age he was an inmate of the County Alms-House, from whence, when large enough 'to fetch a pail of water,' he was apprenticed to a tailor, with whom he served his time."[13] Although his awkward beginnings were spared the romanticism inflicted on his contemporary Abraham Lincoln, the tailor's apprentice never outgrew the psychic attachment to his plebeian origins. Migrating to Greeneville, Tennessee, perhaps following an altercation with his master, Johnson set about to make his way in the world. In 1827, he married Eliza McCardle, continued a program of self-education, and boundlessly ambitious, immersed himself in politics.

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[11] W. C. Kyle to Thomas A. R. Nelson, February 6, 1861, Thomas A. R. Nelson Papers, Lawson-McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.

[12] The following brief sketch of Andrew Johnson, unless otherwise noted, is derived from the various "Introductions" by Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, passim.

[13] An Early Biographical Sketch of Andrew Johnson, copied from the New York Sunday Times and Noah's Weekly Messenger by the Nashville Union, May 21, 1849, ibid., I, 677.

Aligning himself with kindred spirits from the yeomanry and mechanic class of Greeneville, the young tailor was elected alderman in 1829, then mayor for several terms, and ultimately to the general assembly where he served two terms in the house of representatives and one in the senate. Always an admirer of Andrew Jackson, the young Democrat was elected congressman of the first district in 1843 and served five terms before a Whig legislature re-districted the state, attempting to "gerrymander" him out of office.[14]

In Congress, the raw Tennessean had earned a well-deserved reputation as an able debater and forceful speaker, discoursing "often, though rarely upon a subject other than the rights and interests of the masses and upon party questions." Generally speaking extemporaneously and often ungrammatically, Johnson championed homestead legislation; defended the Mexican War "whilst the blood of slaughtered Americans called aloud for vengeance, and the foot of the Mexican invader polluted American soil"; and embraced the political concept of the "white basis," preferring that congressional representation be apportioned on actual white voting population, excluding the three-fifths of Negro population allowed by the Constitution. Politically and philosophically a Jacksonian, he remained "a hard-money, low-tax,

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[14]Even with reapportionment the Whigs were not immediately victorious. Brookins Campbell, a Democrat, actually won the election in 1853, but died before taking office. Not until a special election placed Nathaniel G. Taylor in Johnson's old congressional seat in 1854 did the Whigs get their revenge. Ben Perley Poore, The Political Register and Congressional Directory: 1776-1878 (Boston, 1878), 317, 655.

free-trade, and small expenditure radical Democrat."[15] Animated by his "white basis" impulses, the plebeian scorned the "illegitimate, swaggering, bastard, scrub aristocracy," but remained committed to slavery and those territorial solutions beneficial to southern interests.[16]

Deciding against another race for his seat in Congress and claiming that a gerrymander had made his first district a hostile warren of Whiggery, Johnson quickly seized the opportunity to run for governor and defeated Gustavus A. Henry, ironically, the Whig chieftain who supposedly had "Henrymandered" him out of Washington. In Nashville the political climate was not favorable to many of his accursed "andyjohnsonisms" and other favored projects, including opposition to internal improvements, liquidation of the Bank of Tennessee, judicial reform, aid to education, and similar threats to the status quo. His second term essentially produced the same meager results that had characterized his first. Except for some promising steps in public education and agriculture, the governor's barren accomplishments reflected the inherent weakness of the office and his own maladroit dealings with a legislature always burdened by partisan and sectional disputes. Already considered by some radical reform groups as a possible presidential candidate, however, Johnson began to consider a return to Washington.

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[15] Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, I, 678, 563, 339, 85, 679.

[16] Ibid., 311.

Due in no small part to the plebeian's efforts, James Buchanan carried the state in 1856, the first time in twenty-four years that Tennessee went Democratic in a presidential election. Johnson himself was elected to the Senate over Neill S. Brown, the candidate of the Opposition, that fossilized remnant of the moribund Anig-Know Nothing-American Party. In the Senate he continued the agitation for homestead legislation that endeared him to agrarian groups and earned him the enmity of those fearful of levelers and agrarianism.

By 1856 he foresaw the impending crisis of the Union and the storm of war, declaring that the "roaring can now be heard in the trees." A self-appointed "sentinel on the watchtower," he pronounced the conundrum of the Unionist, namely that "our Southern institutions depend upon the continuance of the Union, and that the Union depends upon non-interference with our Southern institutions." Consequently, he supported the Breckinridge ticket in Tennessee with the growing awareness that Lincoln would win the election of 1860 and that the South would try to secede. "When the crisis comes," he promised, "I will be found standing by the Union."

Johnson's loyal stance would force him into an uneasy alliance with Republicans, Whigs-Know Nothings-Americans-Opposition-Constitutional Unionists, and a few Democrats, each with a different agenda of political imperatives. In Tennessee the Greeneville Democrat worked with his old adversary, Parson Brownlow, of the Knoxville Whig, with Thomas A. R. Nelson and Horace Maynard, both opposition congressmen from East Tennessee, and with other former political opponents. Between November, 1860, and Tennessee's formal

entry in the conflict on the side of the Confederacy, Andrew Johnson would be applauded, praised, vilified, shouted down, threatened, fired upon, have his nose pulled, and burned in effigy. He would not, however, be silenced. He did not fully comprehend the fury and power of the secessionists and he miscalculated the strength and staying power of the Tennessee Unionists, but he tirelessly manned the battlements of the citadel, faithfully and relentlessly guarding the fires of Unionism.

In this great crisis of the republic, the southern Unionist drew upon the wellsprings of the Federalist-Whig tradition and the nationalism of Jacksonian democracy in trying to quench the thirst for secession. Tennessee Unionism bore the hallmark of conservatism as the loyalists sought to identify radicalism and revolutionary change with northern Republicans and southern fire-eaters. Following Lincoln's victory Tennessee Unionists generally made the following arguments against secession: 1) the election of a Republican in a fair canvass represented no danger due to the constitutional checks and balances; 2) slavery was safer in the Union than out of it because of constitutional guarantees; 3) secession would be a repudiation of the common glory and shared heritage of the national experience; and finally, 4) dissolution of the Union raised the spectre of radical revolution.

For several months the conservative elements in the state prevailed, counseling patience and forebearance and expressing faith in the hallowed constitutional processes. John Bell, defeated champion but still the reigning leader of the old Whig-American

constituency, bravely spoke the lexicon that became an article of faith for the Tennessee Unionist, namely, that the election of Abraham Lincoln did not represent a clear and present danger to southern institutions. "It is certain that he has expressed a decided opinion that the South has a constitutional right to demand the faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law," Bell contended.[17] Bemoaning the prospective disaster looming over the South on the occasion of South Carolina's secession, E. G. Sevier of Kingston scorned the Palmetto patriots: "Oh this South Carolina frenzy surpasses in folly and in meanness, in absurdity and wickedness, anything which fancy in her wildest mood has heretofore been able to conceive." Nevertheless, he placed his faith in Lincoln's "Clayism," concluding "I trust he will disappoint his enemies."[18] Edwin H. Ewing, a Nashville lawyer and Whig ex-congressman, writing to Alexander H. Stephens in Georgia, also urged calm and forebearance. He doubted that Lincoln, if, indeed, he was willing, could do any mischief to the institution of slavery. "The Gauls are not yet in the capital, and if their leader should get there it will be without an army, and at the mercy of his foes." He dismissed the Republicans and their principles as "a set of ill-tempered, swollen and conceited asses" promoting "a piece of electioneering trickery."[19]

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[17]John Bell to A. Burwell, December 6, 1860, Nashville Republican Banner, December 8, 1860.

[18]E. G. Sevier to Thomas A. R. Nelson, December 25, 1860, Nelson Papers.

[19]Edwin H. Ewing to Alexander H. Stephens, November 26, 1860, Nashville Republican Banner, November 27, 1860. Stephens had delivered

The Memphis Appeal editorialized that "no grievance is alleged save the fear of executive aggression." The editor ridiculed the apprehensions raised by the Republican victory. "ABRAHAM LINCOLN is a mere official puppet--impotent for detriment, under present circumstances, to any section of the confederacy."[20]

Andrew Johnson, the same senator who had stumped the state for Breckinridge (albeit in a desultory manner), resolved to cleave to the Constitution. Denying both the right and the legitimacy of secession, he refused to "desert the citadel." Contending that the Republican was a minority president by a million votes, the southern Democrat resolved to maintain his position in the Senate and "put down Mr. Lincoln and drive back his advances upon southern institutions, if he designs to make any." Like other opponents of secession, the Tennessean pointed to the restraints on any potential presidential violence to the peculiar institution. Lincoln could not appoint a foreign minister, a consul, a cabinet, or a postmaster without the consent of the Senate. "Let South Carolina send her Senators back; let all the Senators come; and on the 4th of March next we shall have a majority of six in this body against him."[21]

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a widely circulated speech in the Georgia house of representatives on November 14, asserting that there was no reason for secession. See Nashville Patriot, November 26, 1860.

[20]Memphis Appeal, November 14, 1860.

[21]Speech on Secession, December 18-19, 1860, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 38-39, 42-43.

Using the same argument, the colorful and strident editor of the Knoxville Whig belittled the danger:

> If Lincoln should attempt to inaugurate oppressive and unconstitutional measures, and Congress sanction or adopt these measures, whether in reference to slavery or any other subject, then, in my judgment we of the South should await the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States. And if the President, the Congress, and the Supreme Court--the Executive, Legislative and Judicial departments of the Government sanction any . . . iniquitous measures, and unite in attempts to carry them out, I advocate resistance at all hazards, and to the last extremity--and I would then join the South, in a war of extermination.[22]

Brownlow, an aggressive patriot, skilled polemicist, and tireless proselyter for Methodism and Whiggery, blamed his ancient and hoary enemies, the Democrats, and especially the maladroit old bachelor "doughface," James Buchanan, for the perils facing the republic.[23]

Caught in the middle between the extremes of Black Republican radicalism and the revolutionary doctrine of the secessionists, the Tennessee Unionists tried to focus on the essentially conservative nature of the majority of northern voters. John Bell theorized that conservative northerners voted for the Republican ticket due to "their strong and inveterate" hostility to the Democratic party,

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[22]Knoxville Whig, November 17, 1860. During the 1860 canvass, the irrepressible Parson confronted Alabama fire-eater William L. Yancey, boldly threatening, "I propose, when the Secessionists go to Washington to dethrone Lincoln, to seize a bayonet and form an army to resist such an attack and they shall walk over my dead body on the way." Quoted in E. Merton Coulter, William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands (Knoxville, 1971 [1937]), 132.

[23]Knoxville Whig, November 17, 1860.

tainted by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and discredited by the Lecompton constitution.[24] Reminding his listeners that Lincoln was elected by legal and constitutional processes, Andrew Johnson rejected the "red hot madness" of his hasty, southern friends and promised to remain in "this house that was reared by the hands of our fathers." He also insisted that the North was not a hostile monolith.

> Are we going to desert that noble and that patriotic band who have stood by us at the North? who have stood by us upon principle? who have stood by us upon the Constitution? They stood by us and fought the battle upon principle; and now that we have been defeated, not conquered, are we to turn our backs upon them and leave them to their fate? I, for one, will not. I intend to stand by them. How many votes did we get in the North? We got more votes in the North against Lincoln than the entire southern States cast.[25]

During the presidential canvass a number of prominent Tennesseans had campaigned in northern states for John Bell and had returned to their home state impressed with the conservative nature of many northerners and hopeful in their expectations that Black Republicanism did not represent the true voice of the North.[26] Two old-line Whigs,

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[24]Bell to Burwell, December 6, 1860, Nashville Republican Banner, December 8, 1860. Bell reflected that many northerners regarded the Missouri Compromise "as little less sacred and binding than the Constitution."

[25]Speech on Secession, December 18-19, 1860, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 38, 43.

[26]Nashville Patriot, November 7, 1860; Clarksville Chronicle, February 1, 1861. Among them were Bell stalwarts, Felix K. Zollicoffer, Neill S. Brown, Edwin H. Ewing, Gustavus A. Henry, and Washington Barrow, all ironically, to embrace the Confederacy when Tennessee seceded.

Washington Barrow and Neill S. Brown, toiled on behalf of the Bell ticket in New York. Admitting that "innocent, unoffending and well-meaning people" had been "carried away into fanaticism by the unscrupulous and damnable heresies inculcated by Sumner, Helper, Greeley, and Seward," Barrow, a former state senator and congressman, nevertheless was emboldened by the support that he discovered for the Constitutional Union candidate.[27] Brown, a Davidson County legislator, an ex-governor, and a founding father of the state Whig party, professed never to have seen "a more conservative, lion-hearted band of men than those with whom I mingled in the great State of New York, in the recent canvass." Lest their prodigious efforts be in vain, Brown pleaded for their vindication. For, in an effort to save the republic, "they had abandoned their party banners, and stood in serried ranks, hilt to hilt, and shoulder to shoulder, and heart to heart, under the stars and stripes."[28]

In Washington Andrew Johnson declared that slavery would be endangered immediately upon the South's secession. "Every man who has common sense will see that the institution would take up its march and retreat." Proclaiming that Tennessee wished to be consulted before it became a border outpost in the conflict to come, the Senator enjoined the fire-eaters against breaking up the Union

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[27] Nashville Republican Banner, October 18, 1860; Robert M. McBride and Dan M. Robison, comps., Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly (2 vols., Nashville, 1975-79), I, 30.

[28] Neill S. Brown to Messrs. A. Milam, A. C. Beech, and others, December 10, 1860, Nashville Republican Banner, December 13, 1860; McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 86.

without considering the effect on the border states.[29] John Bell asserted that Lincoln could not institute a measure related to slavery "which does not commend itself to the South and the conservative members from the North."[30] Neill S. Brown, a firm advocate of southern rights, explained that slavery was safer in the Union. Congress had no power to interfere with the South's peculiar institution. Lincoln could not injure slavery:

> He has been misrepresented, if he has not repeatedly declared, during the late canvass, that if elected, he would execute the Fugitive Slave Law at all hazards, and that he was opposed to any interference with slavery, either in the States or in the District of Columbia.[31]

When South Carolina left the Union, gloom, despair, and even equivocation began to penetrate the Union ranks. Andrew J. Fletcher, a Greeneville loyalist and former state senator, detected the sentiment for disunion, even in East Tennessee, the heartland of Unionism. "Secession, if it has not, certainly will come." The people already anticipated a partial dissolution. Certain that the South had justifiable grievances, Fletcher observed that "either the Republican party must abandon all its aims, surrender the principal [sic] on which it stands or the union, as it now is partially, must soon be totally dissolved."[32]

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[29]Speech on Secession, December 19-20, 1860, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 33.

[30]Nashville Patriot, December 8, 1860.

[31]Brown to Milam and others, December 10, 1860, Nashville Republican Banner, December 13, 1860.

[32]Andrew J. Fletcher to Nelson, December 18, 1860, Nelson Papers. Fletcher's political views soon put him at odds with some

Unionists invoked the image of the common glory to steel their ranks against capitulation to the fire-eaters. Neill S. Brown proclaimed his loyalty, declaring proudly, "I am a Union man, and have been since my first lessons upon the origin and history of our government." He regarded the founding of the Republic as the greatest political achievement in the whole history of the human race. In a paean to the national beauties and institutions, Brown embossed a florid tribute. "We have a country possessing every variety of climate and soil, and adapted to every species of growth and pursuit . . . in as complete harmony with our national advantages and condition, as if it had been the work of Divine Wisdom itself."[33] In his commentary on the crisis of the Union, Adam Fergusson, a Carthage resident, blamed southern fire-eaters and northern fanatics: "What madness! what a spectacle before the world!" Appealing to the hallowed patriotic traditions common to all Americans, he contended that "each and every Citizen of these United States owes allegiance and fidelity to these Same United States above all other laws."[34] At Memphis Rolfe S. Saunders, despairing of the recent action of

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of his neighbors; after Tennessee seceded, he purchased a pistol to defend against Confederate assassins. On one occasion soldiers visited his home to do him bodily harm, but he lived to tell the tale. See Fletcher to Oliver P. Temple, July 26, October 15, 1861, Oliver P. Temple Papers, University of Tennessee Library.

[33]Brown to Milam and others, December 10, 1860, Nashville Republican Banner, December 13, 1860.

[34]Adam Fergusson to Johnson, December 30, 1860, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 105.

Tennessee's erring sister states, complained that a "few disappointed, ambitious traitors have precipitated us almost into revolution & civil war." Blaming both southern fire-eaters like Yancey and Rhett and northern abolitionists like Sumner, he feared that the great leadership of the past had been undone. Indeed the "majestic work of Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Adams, Madison & their copa[t]riots has been subverted & overturned."[35]

With the telegraph wire electric with calls for conventions, embargoes, and arms, and the air charged with defiance and revolution, conservatives trembled at the spectre of revolutionary change. Brown warned that secession meant "a revolution with all its contingencies, hazards and horrors." It would be "dissolution with a vengeance."[36] Others agreed.

A Nashville Unionist asserted that "to leave this glorious Union, would bring upon us ruin & destruction, in every sense." He preferred to cling to the old republic as long as "a vestige" remained.[37] In Washington Congressman T.A.R. Nelson told his House colleagues that unless the Republicans could not be more forthcoming on some sort of compromise on the slavery question, the rising

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[35]Rolfe S. Saunders to Oliver P. Temple, January 4, 1861, Temple Papers. Made postmaster in Memphis by Lincoln, Saunders joined the cotton-state frenzy after Fort Sumter, denounced coercion, and pledged the proceeds from his position to the Confederacy. Nashville Union and American, April 27, 1861.

[36]Brown to Messrs. Milam, Beech and others, December 10, 1860, Nashville Republican Banner, December 13, 1860.

[37]R. H. McEwen to Oliver P. Temple, February 22, 1861, Temple Papers.

secessionist sentiment surging through the South would overwhelm the conservative elements in Tennessee. Already he noted that Governor Harris had ordered the state legislature into extra session for the purpose of ordering a convention to discuss the state's future relationship with the South and the Union. He pleaded for compromise, forebearance, and understanding. Otherwise, the alternative was an unparalleled war of fratricide and extermination.[38] In West Tennessee Rolfe S. Saunders worried that willful men stood ready to plunge his state and the South into the horrors of revolution and national desolation. "I can see not a gleam of light through the impenetrable gloom that overhangs us." There seemed no escape from the disaster confronting the Republic. "What can we do?" he lamented.[39]

Like pearls falling from a broken strand, the Gulf states of the cotton kingdom slipped from their accustomed place in the Union. Tennessee Unionists watched in despair. First South Carolina, then Mississippi, followed by Florida and the rest, Alabama, Georgia, and finally Louisiana. The gossamer Confederacy was taking on corporeal form.

With a careful eye on events in South Carolina and elsewhere, Governor Isham G. Harris acted. On December 7, 1860, before the Palmetto state cast off its old moorings, he had issued a proclamation, requesting that the legislature meet in extraordinary session on

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[38] Cong. Globe, 36 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 106-111.

[39] Rolfe S. Saunders to Oliver P. Temple, January 4, 1861, Temple Papers.

January 7, to consider the issues raised by recent events.[40] In the aftershock of Lincoln's election many Union stalwarts began to waver, to call for a state convention, a southern convention, or even sterner measures of cooperation with other slave states.[41] Ominously Tennessee's junior Senator A.O.P. Nicholson accurately predicted that most of the Gulf states would leave the Union before Lincoln took office. "If I am not mistaken in the sentiment of Tennessee," he conjectured, "our people require an honest effort to be made to save the Union by demanding additional guarantees, and that it is only when this effort shall have failed that they propose to resort to secession."[42]

Secession! At last the word seemed embryo to the reality, the fear womb to the deed. Episcopal Bishop James H. Otey, the leading spokesman of his church in the state, bemoaned the revolution overtaking his neighbors. He had been once hopeful that there would be "enough of the conservative element left among us--enough of virtue, love of order, and enlightened patriotism, among the people--to form a wall of fire around the citadel of our liberties."

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[40] Tenn. Senate Journal, First Extra Session, 1861, pp. 3-4.

[41] Nashville Republican Banner, December 2, 1860. In a public meeting on December 1, chaired by Felix K. Zollicoffer, a Whig chieftain and later fallen Confederate hero, Edwin H. Ewing's resolution calling for a general southern convention was passed with strong support.

[42] A.O.P. Nicholson to Editors, December 8, 1860, Nashville Union and American, December 13, 1860.

Confronted with the imponderables of recent events, the bishop was filled with dark imaginings and dire forebodings.[43]

Tennesseans were moving toward civil war in the most literal sense. The vital center of conservative nationalism, cementing individuals of different political persuasions together, seemed on the verge of disintegration. Observing the scene from his Mecklenburg home in Knox County, the secessionist physician James G. M. Ramsey denounced the aggressions of the abolitionists to a distinguished northern colleague, historian Benson J. Lossing: "When this political revolution is over--God grant how soon & how safely it may be passed come South," he invited, "& see how much of civilization & of Christian influence the disunionists, & fanatics of the North will have destroyed."[44]

During the after tremors of Lincoln's election, the secession movement of the Gulf states, and the president-elect's awesome silence, the initiative began to shift to the Tennessee secessionists. Calls for common cause with the seceded states, for a state convention, and the raising of military companies began to drown the conservative pleas for patience, forebearance, and deliberation. Even previously staunch Union men like Edwin H. Ewing, Felix K. Zollicoffer, Neill S. Brown, John Lellyett, and others joined in the chorus for an emergency session of the legislature, aimed at providing for a state convention

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[43]Otey to M. F. Maury, September 3, 1860, Memoir of James Henry Otey, 92.

[44]James G. M. Ramsey to Benson J. Lossing, February 4, 1861, James G. M. Ramsey Papers, University of Tennessee Library.

and promoting a general southern conference "to consider existing political troubles."[45] Governor Isham G. Harris eagerly complied.

In his January 7 message to the hastily assembled state legislature, Harris explained the reasons for which he called the members into extraordinary session. "Grave and momentous issues have arisen, which, to an unprecedented degree agitate the public mind and imperil the perpetuity of the Government." Deploring the "systematic, wanton, and long continued agitation of the slavery question" by northern extremists, he enumerated the alleged outrages in a series of charges perhaps self-consciously redolent of those levied against George III in the Declaration of Independence. Unless persuasive guarantees could be secured, he soberly warned, the South must prepare to abandon the institution or be prepared to protect slavery against all hazards.[46] Thus Harris skillfully set the stage for Tennessee's long leap into the dark.

Tennessee secessionists and Unionists shared several similar characteristics. First, there was general agreement on the primacy of slavery in the Tennessee economy and the place of the African in southern society. Sixth district congressman James H. Thomas enunciated the common credo:

> That Tennessee was a white man's State, where the white man, however humble, was still a white man, and superior to a

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[45] Memphis Appeal, November 18, 1860; Nashville Republican Banner, November 24, December 2, 1860.

[46] Robert H. White, Messages of the Governors of Tennessee, 1796-1907 (8 vols., Nashville, 1952-72), V, 255-69.

> negro; that the God of Heaven had so created him, and the history of the races from the most remote period to the present proved this superiority.[47]

Secondly, Tennesseans almost universally despised the Republicans, having not cast a single vote for Lincoln and rarely making a reference to the party, except as the "Black Republicans."[48] East Tennessee Congressman Horace Maynard ridiculed the dapple-hued political polyglot that formed the legions of Lincolnites, including

> Old Whigs and old Democrats; followers of Thomas Jefferson, admirers of Alexander Hamilton; friends of Jackson, friends of Clay; masons, anti-masons; "barnburners," "hunkers," "renters," "anti-renters;" "woolly-heads;" "silver-grays;" Know Nothings, Americans, foreigners, Catholics; protective-tariff men, free-trade men; bank men, bullion men; radicals, conservatives; men of strict construction and men of no construction; men of unquestionable political honesty, and men whose honesty I will not venture to call into question; men of all grades of political sentiment, all shades of political opinion, all bedded together, heads and heels covered by a single blanket, and that woven of African wool.[49]

Although there would be great disagreement over the nature of the threat, both Unionists and secessionists agreed that the party of Lincoln represented fanaticism and extremism.

A third ground for commonality lay in the general consensus on the long history of abuses perpetrated by the Republicans and abolitionists. Tennesseans pointed to the flood of abolition literature and antislavery petitions, the northern personal liberty laws, the

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[47] James H. Thomas, Speech at Columbia, March 18, 1861, Nashville Union and American, April 4, 1861.

[48] Here the Tennesseans anticipated the wartime and postbellum epithet "damn Yankee."

[49] Cong. Globe, 36 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 165.

Underground Railroad, the "Beecher Bibles," the lionization of John Brown and his minions, and similar incendiary actions. Prominent northerners maliciously denounced the Dred Scott decision and the constitutional guarantees relative to the fugitive slave laws, thereby imperiling the public safety and slave property.[50] Thus Tennesseans of every stripe could agree that the state and the South, in general, had just grievances and deserved additional constitutional and legal guarantees to protect slavery.

Finally, Unionists and secessionists alike shared a common bond of affection, respect, and loyalty to the Constitution and the old republic of the Founding Fathers. However, each tried to represent the other as having strayed from the true path and himself as the righteous keeper of the faith. Consequently, when the Tennessee fire-eater invoked the right of revolution to justify secession he was not seeking a brave new world but the reincarnation of the legendary republic of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Jackson. In his mind the secessionist used revolution to justify a restoration of the venerable, democratic, white-ruled, slave holding republic, unsullied by sectional discord and doctrines of racial equality. That such a nation now existed only in hallowed mythology did not make it any less attractive or compelling.

The Tennessee rebel mind embraced a number of propositions in justifying its dizzy plunge into secession and war. Whereas the

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[50] See for example, Isham G. Harris' January 7 speech and Thomas A. R. Nelson's remarks, January 25, White, Messages, V, 255-69; Cong. Globe, 36 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 106-11.

loyalist discounted Lincoln's election as sufficient grounds for destroying the beloved Union, his fire-eating counterpart sought to show unequivocally that the elevation of the Free Soiler to the presidency by a group of sectional fanatics constituted a certain and disastrous threat to the whole fabric of southern civilization. Consequently, the peculiar institution, representing the keystone of southern society, could only be secured by secession and entry into a slaveholding confederacy. In reality, the Tennessee secessionist argued that two different cultures and peoples, North and South, had already emerged within the fluid boundaries of the old republic. Hence the venerated Union of the Founding Fathers was already dead, destroyed by the collision of dissimilar cultures and the pernicious effects of broken compromises and unremitting sectional discord. Permeating the whole rebel argument was the appeal to honor, meaning that Tennessee could not honorably abandon her sister states in the great struggle on behalf of common ideals, principles, goals, and dreams. And, finally, undergirding all other positions were the yin and yang of the pro-slavery argument: the primacy of slavery in the life of Tennesseans and other southerners and the primordial appeal to Negrophobia, invoking the hoary nightmares of the firebrand, pillage, and violated womanhood.

Gideon J. Pillow, a Maury County lawyer and Mexican War veteran later to assume the senior command of Tennessee's provisional forces, sounded the clarion call to arms less than a week following the fateful

presidential canvass.[51] In a widely circulated and influential letter, Pillow set the tone for those who professed to see in the electoral results an ominous portent. "While I agree that there is not, in the manner of Mr. Lincoln's election, any violation of the letter of the Constitution," he admitted, "yet in the accomplished fact--the Government as it was designed by the obvious spirit of the Constitution, is upset." Indeed, he perceived a veritable revolution in the government in which "its forms are used to break down its spirit." Consequently, Pillow did not trust the Republicans to carry out provisions protecting slavery in the Constitution "when the very existence of any such guarantees is denied by that Party."[52]

Democratic Congressman James H. Thomas also issued a letter, dated December 25, 1860, addressed to his sixth district constituents but obviously aimed at a wider audience. He insisted that Lincoln's election presented a serious threat to the entire South. Composed during the heady euphoria of the South Carolina secession crisis, the Thomas broadside reflected many of his fellow-Tennesseans'

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[51]A Democratic kingmaker, Pillow played a large role in the nominations of James K. Polk in 1844 and Franklin Pierce in 1852. He sought the vice-presidential nomination in 1852 and 1856, but saw the position go to other men. Appointed by Governor Harris on May 9, as the senior major general in command of Tennessee's troops, this "vain, ambitious, quarrelsome, and unsuccessful soldier" received much of the blame for the rebel debacle at Fort Donelson. Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography (20 vols., supps. and index, New York, 1928-), XIV, 603-04, hereafter cited as DAB; Knoxville Register, May 13, 1861.

[52]Gideon J. Pillow to Editors, November 12, 1860, Nashville Patriot, November 14, 1860; see also Memphis Appeal, November 20, 1860; Nashville Union and American, November 15, 1860.

fears concerning the president-elect. He contended that the northern people saw slavery as a sin and simply chose a candidate who shared their hostility toward southern institutions. Now the Republican administration could use the immense power of the national government, including the patronage, against the South. Thomas rejected Andrew Johnson's contention that a state could not be coerced, insisting that the senator's argument was "too metaphysical." Persuaded that the whole populace constituted a state, the fire-eating congressman reasoned that "Enforcing laws against an unwilling people is coercion."[53]

In his speech to the extraordinary session of the state legislature Governor Harris likewise reflected on the darker meaning of recent events. "Most of you can remember, with vivid distinctness, those days of brotherhood, when throughout the whole North, the abolitionist was justly regarded as an enemy of his country." However, the calendar had changed. "Weak, diminuitive and contemptible as was this party in the purer days of the Republic, it has now grown to colossal proportions." Arguing that the Republicans already dominated both the House of Representatives and the presidency, Harris predicted that the Senate and the Supreme Court also must soon fall into the revolutionary orbit of Lincoln. Pointing to the reaction of the northern states against the Fugitive Slave Law, the chief executive asserted that the section had openly obstructed its enforcement. "The distempered public opinion of these localities

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[53]James H. Thomas to Sixth District Constituents, December 25, 1860, Fayetteville Observer, January 31, 1861.

having risen above the Constitution and all other law, planting itself upon the anarchial doctrines of the 'higher law,' with impunity defies the Government, tramples upon our rights, and plunders the Southern citizen."[54]

Echoing the governor's dire maledictions and imagery several days later in the same legislative session, Smith County senator James L. Thompson enunciated his views on the inevitability of disunion. An open and earnest advocate of the right of peaceable secession, Dr. Thompson, a physician later to serve the Confederate Army, insisted that Lincoln's victory justified serious consideration. "I say his election, together with the Abolition and Black Republican outrages and aggressions since 1820, shows a gross and utter perversion of the objects for which the Union was created, and is a sufficient cause for dissolution." Indeed, unless the Northern people quickly disassociated themselves from "the diabolical teachings of their leaders," disunion was imperative and immediate. "This sectional party of the North has grown, as it were, from a small speck upon our political horizon," Thompson observed, "until its increasing growth and power have brought upon the country all the evils under which it is now groaning."[55]

At his home at Mecklenburg, in Knox County, Dr. James G. M. Ramsey, another secessionist physician, kept impatient but perceptive

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[54]White, Messages, V, 257-59.

[55]James L. Thompson, Remarks delivered in the State Senate, January 19, 1861, Nashville Union and American, January 22, 1861; McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 718-19.

eyes on the mood of his fellow Tennesseans. Certain that his state's institutions required the sanctuary of the fledgling Confederacy, he indulged in a bit of self-congratulation concerning his own open conspiracy against the Union.

> My disunion sentiments like a contagion are extending all around me & will soon be epidemic--epi (upon) demos (the common people)[.] No Government can or ought to last long. Even in the Jewish Government[,] a Theocracy, the secession of the two tribes from the other ten took place. Those from whom they seceded are now lost.[56]

As the weeks and months hastened into an unsettling but still pacific spring for Tennessee, he became increasingly militant and exhibited growing restiveness with his indecisive neighbors.[57]

In Middle Tennessee, William Moore, a seventy year old Coffee County fire-eater and a veteran of "the war with Jackson," speculated on the broken ties between North and South. Only by forming one great southern Confederacy, where "we can legislate and live harmoniously" could slavery be preserved. While regretting the persistence of Unionism Moore did not believe that Tennessee would remain "fettered by the Black Republicans."[58] The southern patriot blamed the crisis on the deluded and hypocritical northerners who scorned the South for the "great sin" of possessing African slaves.[59]

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[56]Ramsey to W.B.A. Ramsey, December 26, 1860, Ramsey Papers.

[57]Ramsey to A. Porter, April 16, 1861, ibid.

[58]William Moore to John L. Jones, February 18, 1861, Fayetteville Observer, February 28, 1861.

[59]Moore to [N. O. Wallace], January 5, 1861, ibid., January 10, 1861.

Basic to the strategy of secession was the argument that the South had developed a culture that was inherently different from the North, would-be rebels contended that the survival of the uniquely southern culture depended on slavery which could best be secured outside the Union in a new confederacy.[60] In the mind of the Tennessee secessionist separation was literally or almost literally an accomplished fact based on the dissimilarity in cultures. All that remained was the overt act.

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[60]The impact of slavery on the southern economy and culture in general has been the subject of much debate. Contemporary southern apologists like East Tennessee fire-eater William H. Sneed sought to convince their less fortunate neighbors that the social and economic effects of abolition would be devastating to the poor whites. Raising the potent spectre of a dangerous, aggressive, and still primitive underclass suddenly thrust into intimate social contact and economic competition with the southern whites, Sneed declared that, unlike the lower classes, the wealthier elements with their greater resources and mobility could more easily cope with the problems implicit in abolition. "How different will be the fate of the WORTHY, HONORABLE POOR!" he wailed. Similarly, scholars have puzzled over the economic implications of slavery, the concentration of land ownership, and the condition of the middle class. Older historians, like Ulrich B. Phillips, while modifying earlier interpretations that portrayed the system as harsh and inhumane, nevertheless argued that land-hungry planters monopolized the most fertile regions, leaving the small farmers and lower class whites to cultivate the poorer soils and less desirable areas left to them. However, Frank Owsley and other later historians rediscovered the yeoman farmer and rejected the stereotype of "two great social classes, slaveholders and nonslaveholders." Owsley claimed that this middle class enjoyed a growing prosperity in the decade before the Civil War, increasing both its holdings in valuable, productive lands and in slaves. Indeed the great mass of slaveholders, like the slaveless, were farmers rather than large planters. The Vanderbilt historian also concluded that the yeoman farmer and the planter frequently lived side by side, cultivating lands of equal fertility and sharing in the growing prosperity of the 1850's. More recently, two economic historians, using highly questionable but genuinely provocative techniques and data, have raised a whole series of new questions. With the aid of computer research, Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman concluded that slavery, far from being

Dr. James G. M. Ramsey had foretold the profound schism over two years before Sumter. "I conceal from no one my deep conviction that the days of our present Union are nearly numbered," he asserted. "Apart from the slavery issue there are other elements at work which, at an early day, must produce a dismemberment," he wrote. "The antagonism is too strong," Ramsey insisted, "the estrangement is too deep seated to be reconciled or healed."[61]

In Ramsey's view two different peoples had emerged on the American continent, each seeking the survival of its own institutions. The North produced the Yankees. "The high toned New-England spirit has degenerated into a clannish feeling of profound Yankeeism." Inevitably conflict and separation would arise with the development of the "proud Cavalier spirit of the South." Ramsey described the northern masses as "venal, corrupt, covetous, mean and selfish," in

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inefficient and economically unprofitable, compared favorably with free labor and helped provide a high standard of living for all southerners. Naturally, such controversial findings have initiated a new wave of research, raising new questions and arriving at different conclusions. William H. Sneed to the Voters of Knox County, Knoxville Register, January 31, 1861. Ulrich B. Phillips, "The Origin and Growth of the Southern Black Belts," American Historical Review, XL (1906), 798-816. Richard Hofstadter, "U. B. Phillips and the Plantation Legend," Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 109-24. Frank L. and Harriet Chappell Owsley, "The Economic Basis of Society in the Late Ante-bellum South," Journal of Southern History, XI (1940), 24-45; Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery (2 vols., Boston, 1974); see also Paul A. David, Herbert G. Gutman, Richard Sutch, and others, Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery (New York, 1976), which disputes the findings of Fogel and Engerman.

[61] William B. Hesseltine, ed., Dr. J.G.M. Ramsey: Autobiography and Letters (Nashville, 1954), 94.

hopeless contrast to the noble southerners. "Our passions, our tastes, our character, our vices even, are different and dissimilar," he concluded. Thus Ramsey's explanation of the growing estrangement between North and South drew upon the hoary mythology of the Cavaliers and Yankees to account for the profound schism between the sections.[62] Others used the same embroidery to insist that separation was foreordained, awaiting only the benediction of the vox populi. The contention that disunion was already a reality was basic to the mind of the Tennessee secessionist.

A.W.O. Totten, a Jackson lawyer and former state supreme court justice, agreed that the "Union, except in form, is virtually dissolved already." The constitutional guarantees were no longer honored by the North and the vital bond of fraternity had been replaced by strife and discord. Concession had been met with agitation and aggression. Even the public lands had been appropriated by the northern Free Soilers. "To this domain a Homestead law is to be applied," Totten observed, "to encourage its speedy settlement by this Northern hive." The loss of revenue thus incurred would be the excuse to raise the tariff.[63]

Like Ramsey and Totten, the Reverend Mr. Edward MacClure, preaching at the Memphis Grace Episcopal Church at the height of the secession

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[62] Ibid., 94-95.

[63] A.W.O. Totten to Isham G. Harris, November 21, 1860, Nashville Union and American, December 1, 1860; Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, II, 318n. Totten later served as one of the commissioners appointed by Harris to negotiate a military league with the Confederacy.

winter, perceived abiding differences between North and South. Adopting the time-honored distinctions of Cavalier and Pilgrim for his text, the Reverend Mr. MacClure sought to show in a sermon published on January 27, 1861, that southern culture was based on superior antecedents. Admitting that the Pilgrim experience had its moments of grandeur, beauty, and epic heroism, he nonetheless implied that this historical episode had been overdrawn and exaggerated. Resolving to correct the record, MacClure denied that the New England fathers were driven exclusively by piety, zeal, or percecution by the Church of England. Their "charter was a mainly commercial one, and they entered into partnership with a company of merchants, who assisted them in their enterprise." More importantly, the Episcopal priest linked the legendary intolerance of the Pilgrims and Puritans with the New England abolitionists of his contemporary world: "we see, even now, looming up from the same quarter, the dread shadow of war, with out-stretched hand and gleaming sword, to carry out their own abstract ideas of morality over the leng[t]h and breadth of this mighty continent."[64]

The Reverend Mr. MacClure also deflated the contention held in some quarters that the Pilgrim fathers were the founders of America and its traditional values. Instead he vigorously proclaimed that the Cavaliers of colonial Virginia laid the foundations of the Republic, being the true and Providential "pioneers of a mighty movement." He described the grand adventure of the seminal colonists,

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[64]Memphis Appeal, January 27, 1861.

declaring, "True, these men were not all saintly in temper or conduct; yet as they were the seeds of a great empire, God's providence, like a guiding star, led them across the mighty deep." Ultimately the Cavaliers carried to America the enlightened elements of Anglo-Saxon law, liberty, and representative government. MacClure depicted the Cavaliers as lovers of education, bringing with them "the refined habits of the higher orders of English society, and were decided members of the church in the mother country." Such were the true roots of southern and American society.[65] The conviction that the superior elements of southern society were under constant danger inside the Union due to the aggressions of the North was an article of faith in the mind of the Tennessee rebel. MacClure's sermon represented an attempt to give substance to that belief and to underscore the superiority of the endangered Cavalier tradition.

Secessionists railed at the absurdity of waiting for compromises. By late May the political situation in Tennessee was extremely volatile. Although loyalist stalwarts like Andrew Johnson, Horace Maynard, and Thomas A. R. Nelson remained stubbornly persistent in their efforts to vindicate the Union, the disunionists were sanguine and emboldened. One, J. A. Minnis, a Memphis area secessionist long accustomed to honorable political differences with Nelson, wrote the congressman, professing the deepest respect for the East Tennessean. Despite their past political disagreements, Minnis insisted that "I still have every confidence in your integrity and honesty." However, he was convinced that the days of the old Republic had passed.

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[65] Ibid.

> That the Union of these States is permanently gone, it does seem to me, all must admit, and now the only question can be, what is the end to be; that North there is no constitutional Government it does seem to me palpably plain; ever[y] principle and provision of the Constitution has been violated[;] the Government is not pretended to be administered under the Constitution but upon principles, and powers usurped, by a nominal head who does not even deserve the name of Military Despotism, or Tyran[n]y.[66]

In the full logic of secession, the disruption of the Union was a foregone conclusion. The only choice was which side to choose, North or South.[67] Given the belief that slavery was so interwoven into southern life that the two could not be separated without irreversible damage, the secessionist mind could not reasonably conceive of a Tennessee free from black bondage. So compelling was the linkage between southern civilization and Negro slavery that ultimately the secessionists embraced the rationale that Tennesseans could not honorably abandon their neighbors in the cotton states, who, after all, stood ready to defend the common faith. The Clarksville lawyer, ex-state representative, and Whig party politico, Gustavus A. Henry, expressed the sentiments of many Tennesseans in January 1861, when he admitted that disunion would place him in the ranks of the Confederacy. "I could not look with indifference upon the struggle of brethren, bound to me by all the ties of a common interest, and a common fate, growing out of homogeneous institutions." Later to

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[66] J. A. Minnis to Nelson, May 22, 1861, Nelson Papers.

[67] William H. Sneed, the outspoken East Tennessee fire-eater, asserted that the "Government is already broken up, and the question for you to decide is, whether you will choose the North or the South." See William H. Sneed to the Voters of Knox County, Knoxville Register, January 31, 1861.

serve in the Confederate Congress, Henry, dubbed the "Eagle Orator" by his partisans, pledged to espouse the cause of his southern compatriots "in peace or in war."[68] Others followed the same logic and acted accordingly.

A Franklin County fire-eater and speaker of the senate, Tazewell W. Newman saw ruin and dishonor in submitting to coercion. The honorable path of happiness, safety, and prosperity lay in a cooperative action with the seceded states. "I speak, for one, and I but speak the sentiment of Tennessee, when I say she would do anything consistent with duty, honor and justice, to save the Government from destruction." Shortly thereafter, convinced that further delay was ignoble and the cause just, he abruptly resigned his legislative seat to join the Franklin County regiment sent to Virginia in advance of his own state's secession. "It is not fear, it is not submission, but that nobler instinct," Newman had said of Tennessee's proper path, "that would have her course just before God and man, before she strikes down the best, fairest, the happiest form of government ever devised by the wisdom of man."[69]

Newman's feelings reveal a basic irony in the secessionists' view of their situation. They shared with the Unionists the adoration and respect for the Constitution, government, and historical traditions

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[68]Gustavus A. Henry to E. B. Haskins, James Bowling, Will Dortch, and others, January 29, 1861, Clarksville Chronicle, February 1, 1861; Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, II, 143n.

[69]Senate Journal, First Extra Session, 1861, pp. 4-5; Fayetteville Observer, May 9, 1861.

of the republic.[70] However, they argued that the ancestral republic was no longer a viable entity. It had been destroyed by the Republicans in their relentless war on the constitutional guarantees and the congressional compromises (which had in the mind of the secessionist enjoyed the sanctity of holy writ). Thus "the palladium of our liberties" had become a desecrated temple, plundered by the fanatical and barbarous zealots of Lincoln. Under these circumstances revolution was a natural phenomenon.

In his charge to the students of the Nashville Female Academy, the principal, Reverend Mr. Collins D. Elliot, explained the "unholy" course of events. Admonishing his pupils to abandon their allegiance to the old stars and stripes, Elliot insisted that "you but rescue their former glory by refusing to honor them--because of the unconstitutional and unholy use" of their "once sacred fold" by the North. "You do not destroy the temple of Liberty erected by your fathers," he counseled, but, in effect, "drive out from its eternal walls those who choose to pervert the designs of its original founders."[71]

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[70]Writing to an eager cousin, awaiting transfer from the drill fields of Knoxville to the battlegrounds of Virginia, a Carter County rebel invoked the glorious days of the past. He hoped that "you and your company will show to the world that the same blood flows as richly in your veins, as when our brave soldiers drove back the invader at New Orleans, conquered the Indians upon the plains of Alabama, and mounted the fiery walls of Monter[r]ey." See T. B. Galbraith to William H. Watterson, June 11, 1861, Watterson Family Papers, Lawson-McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.

[71]Collins D. Elliot to [Nashville Female Academy Students], April 15, 1861, Nashville Union and American, April 18, 1861.

Thus the secessionists argued that the old Union was a desecrated and defiled temple. In destroying the government, the rebels were not repudiating the venerated shrines of their ancestors but merely effacing a perversion or an aberration. On the ruins of the old they resolved to create a new edifice based on the pure and undefiled republic of their fathers. The Confederacy then would rise, Phoenix-like, from the rubble of the old.[72] Such were the dreams of the enchanted.

Meanwhile, the growing chasm between Unionists and secessionists in the state was being replicated in the national Congress. On January 23, 1861, Whig Ninth District Congressman Emerson Etheridge rose to disparage southern fears of the Republican party, labeling the personal liberty laws "rather an imaginary than a real grievance" and calling the disunion sentiment "a reign of terror."[73] Incensed by his Tennessee colleague's apparent capitulation, William T. Avery, a fire-eating Democrat from the Memphis area, responded, aiming to vindicate his state from the false opinions implicit in Etheridge's "extraordinary, and, I may say, unnatural speech." Tired of pleading

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[72] State senator James L. Thompson, representing Smith and Sumner Counties, declared that "we earnestly desire a United Southern Confederacy, based upon the Constitution of our fathers." Senate Journal, First Extra Session, 1861, p. 53.

[73] Cong. Globe, 36 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 112, 115. In referring to current speculation that Etheridge (and other Tennessee Unionists) would be rewarded with cabinet posts or other appointments, a contemporary journal bitterly observed that "The northern ass has at long last thrown off the lion's skin of his southern pretensions--the political Judas demonstrated his readiness to accept the thirty pieces of Republican silver." Memphis Appeal, January 27, March 5, 9, 1861.

for concessions and guarantees, Avery alluded to the growing empire of the southern confederacy, stretching from the Atlantic to the Mississippi and the prospect of others joining the rebel venture. "The only question which will be left for Tennessee," he theorized, "is, will she join these, her southern glorious sisters, or will she link her fortunes with the Republican North?"[74]

Implicit in Avery's speech, as in every other secessionist's expression on the subject, was the conviction that slavery was a primary and necessary ingredient in southern life. On the evening of November 27, 1860, the Reverend Mr. Jesse B. Ferguson, a charismatic and persuasive Church of Christ minister, drew an overflow audience in the state house of representatives where he lectured on the crisis of the Union.[75] Conceding that the slaveholding population was small, he insisted that "no equal number of men on earth contribute so much to commerce and the ongoing of the great car of civilized progress." Deploring the constant "huckstering in human misfortunes" and the "barter in human consciences in the name of Religion, of God

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[74] Cong. Globe, 36 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix 121-22, 124; Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961 (Washington, D.C., 1961), 497, hereafter cited as BDAC. Avery did not seek re-election when his term expired in March and later served the Confederate Army as a lieutenant colonel. He was captured at Island No. 10 on April 8, 1862. Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 318n.

[75] Nashville Union and American, December 4, 5, 1860. Born in Philadelphia, Ferguson lived in Virginia and Ohio before moving to Nashville in 1847. A congregational dispute split his church and he moved on to Mississippi, Alabama, and Missouri. Just before the war Ferguson returned to Nashville. With the onset of the Federal occupation, he refugeed in Ohio where Andrew Johnson demanded his arrest. See Johnson to David Tod, July 16, 1862, ibid, V, 562-63, 563n.

and Humanity" by the fanatical Republicans, Ferguson asserted the primacy of slavery in the fortunes of Tennesseans:

> They are given to us in trust, by the God of all. We ought to know their capacity and the dangers to which a precipitate revolution would expose them. They have cultivated our fields and woven the fabric of our prosperity and greatness. We should not tear it or allow it to be torn with impunity. . . . You are a hopeless minority; your slave interests destroyed in the South; your last negro sold there, and a mighty tide of inflated and powerful fanaticism directly upon your border. Their ruin is your ruin, and severed from them you will be compelled to aid in their overthrow.[76]

Clearly, Ferguson had lost faith in the course of the Union and stood ready to chart his passage by the new polestar of the Confederacy.[77]

Inspired by the same logic, Representative John M. Bright addressed a group of Lincoln County citizens on December 3. Bright, two times a presidential elector, reduced the secession crisis to the single issue of the safety of slavery. Persuaded that the peculiar institution constituted an important element in the wealth of the state, the Fayetteville lawyer contended that the economic security of the nonslaveholder was intermingled in the fabric of slavery. Should the slaves be freed, the effort would be catastrophic to the white yeomen class.

> Offer your pork to the former slaveholder, and he tells you that he has no persons to consume it. Offer your mules, and he tells you that he has no persons to work them--perhaps

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[76]Nashville Union and American, December 4, 5, 1860. Ferguson had delivered his address in response to a call from a bipartisan group of leading Unionists and secessionists, perhaps an indication of the ambivalent nature of Middle Tennesseans during the secession winter. So great was the response that he gave the same lecture on the following evening to another overflow crowd. See ibid., December 6, 1860.

[77]See Memphis Appeal, April 2, 1861.

> he may offer to sell you some, at $25 each, which are starving on the commons. Offer him your grain, and he will tell you that he has no commodity that brings him money, and he must be content to live upon his own productions.[78]

Bright reinforced his economic argument with the ancient argument that white men could not tolerate the arduous tasks and circumstances surrounding the cultivation of the staple crops, declaring that white labor would never replace black servitude in the cultivation of rice, sugar, and cotton.[79] Many would agree.

During the special session of the state legislature, George Gantt, a Maury County representative and former Breckinridge elector, spoke on the issues facing Tennessee. Convinced that the success of the Black Republicans and the secession of the cotton states pressed upon his state with the gravest and most momentous concerns, Gantt soberly reaffirmed Tennessee's stake in slavery as a political and economic consideration. "She is vitally interested in slavery as a political institution, and in slaves as property," he insisted. "Our slave property is interwoven with the whole frame-work of our society, and identified with all our industrial pursuits," the Maury secessionist argued, and "its destruction involves degradation and ruin." He felt that the Republicans despised slavery with such intensity that the party would perish if it lost its animating sentiment of hatred. Nevertheless, Tennessee faced the most momentous and

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[78]John M. Bright, Speech to Lincoln County Citizens, December 3, 1860, Fayetteville Observer, January 10, 1861; McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 79-80.

[79]Bright, Speech, Fayetteville Observer, January 10, 1861.

vital considerations. The state's danger was acute and immediate due to her border state position.

> Already a minority on this question, the secession of the Cotton States leaves us in a hopeless minority. It takes not the prescience of prophecy to foretell, that in a few years, under these circumstances, if we tamely submit to the dominion of this anti-slavery spirit, that in all the boundaries of Tennessee, "the sun will not rise upon a slave, or set upon a master."[80]

Thus the indelible imprint of the African's shadow upon southern life was conceded and confirmed. Even the free farmer and laborer were told that the destruction of slavery meant their own economic ruin. However, should that vision not be sufficient to rally the brown jeaned farmer and the callused-handed mechanic to the ranks of the pro-slavery forces, the fire-eaters could invoke two more forbidding spectres, the twin horrors of slave insurrections and Negro equality, to seal their loyalty.[81]

A.W.O. Totten, the Jackson lawyer and state supreme court jurist, in an early response to Lincoln's election, proclaimed that

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[80] Tennessee House Journal, First Extra Session, 1861, pp. 43-44; McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 274-75. Gantt joined the Confederate forces in December, 1861, serving as lieutenant colonel in the Ninth Battalion, Tennessee Cavalry.

[81] See also Landon C. Haynes, Speech on the Condition of the Country, December, 1860, Fayetteville Observer, February 7, 1861. Haynes, an East Tennessee fire-eater, maintained that the Tennessee non-slaveholder and others had an interest in the continuation of the peculiar institution. In his view "all the great branches of the national industry are not only based upon the institution, but the elevation of the wages of the white laboring masses eminently depend upon its existence." Arguing that the slave owner was "the natural, the interested and legitimate ally and friend of the white laboring man," the Knox County secessionist warned that "the interests of the white laborer and the slaveholder are identical."

the "anti-slavery policy of the dominant party, our northern enemies, no longer friends," would ruin the South. "Its property and various pursuits will be destroyed; its political equality be made to succumb to Northern domination," he contended, "and its social condition be degraded and rendered insecure." In the end the South would lose its honor, prestige, and material concerns, becoming "the Hayti of the American Union."[82] Totten's references to Haiti was a code word for slave revolts, arising from the successful rebellion led by Toussaint L'Overture, the so-called "Black Napoleon" whose bloody war against the French at the beginning of the century produced nightmares in the South for the next six or seven decades.

In a December speech at the other end of the state, Landon C. Haynes, an East Tennessee party chieftain, threw down the gauntlet of resistance and warned his Knoxville audience of the danger that lay ahead.

> The abolitionist, in the fury of his fanaticism, acting upon the minds of free negroes of the South and North, and they upon the slaves, would attempt to bring this servile race into the field of conflict; and the flames of incendiary brands, the outrages of brutal lust and cruelty of barbaric ferocity to women and children, would in all probability, lend the gloom of more awful horrors to the civil strife in which a brother may shed a brother's blood.[83]

Governor Harris continued the same tack in his polemic against the Republicans delivered to the state legislature on January 7, accusing the party of murderous intent. Reviewing the catalogue of

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[82] A.W.O. Totten to Isham G. Harris, November 21, 1860, Nashville Union and American, December 1, 1860.

[83] Haynes, Speech, Fayetteville Observer, February 7, 1861.

Republican crimes, Harris vilified the party of abolition. "It has, through certain leaders, proclaimed to the slaves the terrible motto, 'Alarm to the sleep, fire to the dwellings, poison to the food and water of slaveholders.'" Finally, the governor assailed the Republican party for one other misdeed, presumably even more odious than all the rest. "It has, in the person of the President elect, asserted the equality of the black with the white race."[84]

Such an appeal to racism would be lost on loyal slaveowners like Andrew Johnson, who shared the same dour view of the black man's place in the world as most of his contemporaries. Since he regarded the Negro as a social inferior, Johnson had no difficulty defending and promoting the peculiar institution as a social good.[85] Believing that the constitutional checks and balances were strong enough to hold the rabid abolitionists at bay, the Tennessee senator and his fellow Unionists argued that slavery was safer in the Union. Nevertheless, the southern loyalists confronted a revolutionary situation. Their opposition was well-organized and determined.

In response to Governor Harris' message and public pressure, the general assembly passed an act on January 19, 1861, authorizing an election to determine the will of the people, for or against a convention to consider the existing relationship between Tennessee and the United States. The act further provided for the election of

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[84] White, Messages, V, 260.

[85] As late as March, 1862, Johnson still believed that "slaves should be in subordination, and will live and die so believing." See Speech to Davidson County Citizens, March 22, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 231.

delegates in the event that the convention was selected. Finally, secession would be submitted to the voters.[86]

In a memorable, hotly contested canvass, the Union supporters carried the day. Portraying the vote in the convention proposal as a plebescite on the Union, the advocates of "No Convention" managed a clear loyal majority of 11,877. The secessionists had been momentarily rebuffed. However, the Tennessee loyalists enjoyed their triumph briefly, realizing that the fate of the state depended on events beyond its borders.[87]

In Washington, Richmond, and elsewhere, desperate men sought to find last minute solutions. Drafted originally by Kentucky's Senator John J. Crittenden and like the grand old man, himself, stamped in the Henry Clay tradition, the so-called Crittenden Compromise was stillborn, a victim of Lincoln's desire to keep slavery out of the territories and the southern senators' reluctance to spit into the winds of secession. All attempts to amend the Constitution to further protect slavery or to allow its extension into the territories failed. Even the so-called "peace conference" of 133 delegates from twenty-one states and the Kansas territory which assembled in Washington on the eve of Jefferson Davis' assumption of the Presidency of the Confederacy accomplished nothing and ended in frustration. A number of distinguished Tennesseans, including Felix K. Zollicoffer, Samuel Milligan, Judge A.W.O. Totten, and

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[86] White, Messages, V, 271.

[87] Ibid., 272.

others attended the inconclusive and abortive conference, hoping to find a solution to the crisis.[88] However, these final efforts were washed away in the tidal wave of Fort Sumter and Lincoln's subsequent call for volunteers. Men like "the Eagle Orator," Gustavus A. Henry, who were disposed to stay in the Union until the North attempted coercion, were carried away in the flood.[89] In Nashville Zollicoffer, William G. Harding, and other erstwhile Unionists attended public meetings celebrating the news of Fort Sumter's surrender. Resolutions expressing sympathy with the Confederacy, condemning Lincoln's actions, and opposing any attempt to recapture seized federal property were passed almost unanimously, save for three or four "sepulchral nays that excited to the highest pitch the disapprobation of the meeting."[90] The Union's vital center was disintegrating.

Governor Harris issued a negative and truculent response to Lincoln's call for volunteers, further inciting the fire-eaters. While applauding the governor's refusal to aid the federal government, several Whig leaders, including Neill S. Brown, Russell Houston, John Bell, Balie Peyton, and others issued an "Address to the People of Tennessee," condemning both secession and coercion. Advocating

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[88] Mark M. Boatner, III, The Civil War Dictionary (New York, 1959), 894; James W. Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee: 1860-1869 (Gloucester, Mass., 1966 [1934]), 12-14. Held February 4-27, 1861, this conference was called by the Virginia assembly to satisfy the deep South on slavery. Former President John Tyler presided.

[89] See Gustavus A. Henry to E. B. Haskins, James Bowling, Will Dortch, and others, January 29, 1861, Clarksville Chronicle, February 1, 1861.

[90] Nashville Union and American, April 14, 1861.

neutrality or independence, these conservatives hoped that Tennessee might yet lead the way to a peaceful solution of the crisis by a border state conference.[91]

Governor Harris again called the legislature into special session on April 25, declaring that a state of war already existed and urging that the assembly pass an ordinance of secession. On May 6, the legislature approved "A Declaration of Independence and Ordinance Dissolving the Federal Relations between the State of Tennessee and the United States" to be submitted to the people for ratification on June 8.[92] Johnson, Nelson, and Maynard left Washington to canvass the voters, hoping to stem the tide threatening to engulf the state. However, the sentiment of the moment had changed with the secessionists sensing victory and the loyalists already tasting the bitter gall of defeat.

With committees of public safety being formed and volunteer companies organizing, the prevailing mood hardly encouraged a fair canvass.[93] In Cookeville, a young Unionist wrote his father on April 30, observing that the people in the area were greatly agitated. "A man is hardly allowed to express his opinion here now unless he

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[91]Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 15.

[92]Ibid., 17-18; White, Messages, V, 278-89.

[93]A woman writing to a Bull's Gap resident noted several months prior that violence and fears of insurrection prevailed in her area, observing that "they has [sic] eight killed since the allection [sic] besides railroad and other accide[n]ts." Letter of Nannie Worley, December 14, 1860, Roswell Kingsley Papers, University of Tennessee Library; Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 18-21.

is for the South."[94] Elsewhere, Andrew Johnson, having remained in the Senate during the February canvass lest it appear that "he had deserted his post in W. to interfere with an election at home," hurried to participate in the June referendum to rally the Union cause.[95] Enroute to Greeneville on the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad, Sunday, April 21, the Tennessean encountered a hostile mob at the Lynchburg station. Amid cries of "hang him! hang him!" from the "six or eight hundred persons" gathered about the train, several individuals crowded into the car where he was riding to threaten and insult him. The young editor of the Lynchburg Republican, William W. Hardwicke, accosted the senator and pulled his nose. Johnson immediately drew a pistol to defend himself and Robert, his son and traveling companion, but Frank Morrison, a railroad official, intervened to prevent further trouble. The senator had apparently narrowly escaped a similar mob at Liberty, Virginia.[96]

Not surprisingly it became increasingly difficult for Unionists and especially Andrew Johnson to speak in Tennessee. A Nashville newspaper complained that he spoke at Rogersville just before a group of slaves murdered George R. Kite, an area resident, his daughter, his mother-in-law, and sister-in-law. "We understand that Andrew

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[94]Jackson McDowell to Curtis McDowell, April 30, 1861, Lela McDowell Blankenship, ed., Fiddles in the Cumberlands (New York, 1943), 40-42.

[95]Robert Hatton to William B. Campbell, January 24, 1861, David Campbell Papers (microfilm copy), Tennessee State Library and Archives.

[96]Lynchburg Virginian, April 23, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, May 23, 1861; Memphis Appeal, April 25, 1861.

Johnson was permitted to make a speech in that neighborhood a day or two before the dreadful occurrence, and the blood of these slaughtered victims was probably shed as one of its consequences," the editor conjectured. "The people of East Tennessee owe it to their own safety to put a stop immediately, by force, if necessary, to Andrew Johnson making speeches in their midst," he warned.[97] Following his speech in one town, the local editor scorned him as a dangerous arch demagogue ("Ambitious, selfish, jacobinical, and leveling") who had spent an entire life in planting the seeds of revolution and cultivating class prejudice.[98]

By the end of April and the first of May, regiments of cavalry and infantry were being raised all over the state. The presence of militant young rebels, marching and drilling in an area, often sufficed to awe the most ardent Unionist. It was only with great difficulty that the officers prevented members of Colonel Peter Turney's volunteer regiment from arresting Johnson while he was speaking at Philadelphia, Tennessee.[99] Often canvassing with his Washington

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[97]Quoted in Knoxville Register, May 16, 1861. Fears of insurrection had been prevalent throughout Tennessee since the 1860 election. In Jackson a New England singing master was ridden out of town on a rail after the discovery of "several negro daguerrotypes, as well as several suspicious letters" in the individual's trunks. A Sparta resident allegedly expressing abolition sentiments was threatened with hanging, and rumors of a proposed slave rebellion in Lincoln and Franklin County roused those counties to watchfulness. Clarksville Chronicle, December 21, 1860; Blankenship, Fiddles in the Cumberlands, 47; Fayetteville Observer, May 2, 1861.

[98]Athens Post, May 10, 1861.

[99]Fayetteville Observer, May 23, 1861.

colleagues Horace Maynard and T.A.R. Nelson, the Senator encountered hostile jeers, groans, boos, drums beating, and rebel flag waving all over East Tennessee. He was warned to stay out of Blountville, shouted down in Jonesboro, and narrowly avoided violence in several other places.[100] During a Union rally in Knoxville, his speech was interrupted by a rebel brass band and two military companies, which suddenly advanced on the stand in a provocative manner, "drums and secession flags flying." A violent confrontation was averted only by the intercession of two prominent secessionist leaders.[101]

As the election neared, many persons came to believe that the Union cause was hopeless. One Nashville correspondent advised Johnson that great personal hostility existed toward him in Middle and West Tennessee. "I do not believe you can Safely travel over . . . even the R.R. lines passing through these two sections without indignity, if not violence!"[102] The voters theoretically would vote for "Separation" or "No Separation," but many prominent Unionists were suddenly mute, convinced that the cause was hopeless or that expression of one's view would be dangerous.

The handwriting on the wall had appeared in Nashville at an abortive Union convention on May 2, to nominate a candidate for governor for the upcoming August election. The convention had been

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[100] Nashville Republican Banner, May 10, 12, June 20, 1861; W. H. Crouch to Landon C. Haynes, May 6, 1861, Nelson Papers.

[101] Temple, East Tennessee, 185-86.

[102] Jeptha Fowlkes to Johnson, May 29, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 482.

sparsely attended. Soon after the few delegates entered the hall, a large, unfriendly crowd of spectators moved in to view the deliberations. "They looked fierce and rough, and had a dark, ominous, threatening aspect." Upon realizing that they faced a hostile mob, the Union delegates quickly adopted resolutions nominating ex-Governor William B. Campbell and adjourned immediately. "All this was done so quickly that the supposed mob stood confounded when it found the delegates gone."[103] Thus the dominant mood obviously militated against a fair canvass on the question of "Separation" or "No Separation" if the leading Unionists of the State could be intimidated in a nominating convention.

Indeed, Governor Isham G. Harris had anticipated the vote on secession by securing from the legislature on May 1 authorization to appoint three commissioners to treat with Confederate authorities and enter into a military league with the government. He immediately appointed Gustavus A. Henry, A.W.O. Totten, and Washington Barrow for this responsibility. On May 6, the legislature adopted and ratified the Confederate Constitution. The next day he secured the approval for entering into a temporary convention with the Confederacy "for the purpose of meeting pressing exigencies." Harris also authorized the rebel government to erect a battery at Memphis and encouraged Tennessee volunteers to join the southern army.[104]

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[103]Temple, East Tennessee, 227.

[104]White, Messages, V, 292-303. Between May and December, 1861, Harris organized more than seventy regiments for Confederate service, creating the nucleus for the Army of Tennessee, and later

On June 8, 1861, the participating electorate apparently approved the question of "Separation" by a vote 108,399 to 47,233.[105] Dr. John Berrien Lindsley, the Nashville physician, minister, and president of the University of Nashville stayed home in disgust. "Regarding the whole matter as null from illegality I did not vote." He charged that the secessionists prevented a normal canvass in Middle and West Tennessee, "the speaking and printing being all on one side."[106] At Sparta a twenty-two year old female diarist lamented that the state had been voted out of the Union, sadly noting that a great country and government had been ruined.

> But it would have not been had the people been allowed to vote their true sentiments. At least I do not believe it would. Nearly all the Union men in this neighborhood stayed at home, not wishing to get into a brawl and deeming it a hopeless cause. And what did go did not vote.[107]

Unionists also charged with substantial accuracy that large numbers of soldiers from other states were allowed to cast their votes against the Union. In large portions of West and Middle Tennessee, these loyalists insisted, speakers were silenced, newspapers suppressed, and ballots mishandled to the detriment of those opposed

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joined the staff of rebel General Albert Sidney Johnston. He subsequently served on the staff of every other commander of the western army. Moreover, he would participate in all major battles in the Tennessee theatre except Perryville. Thomas L. Connelly, Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862 (Baton Rouge, 1967), 25.

[105] Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 21.

[106] Lindsley, Diary, 72.

[107] Blankenship, Fiddles in the Cumberlands, 49-50.

to secession. Perhaps only in the loyal sections of East Tennessee were Unionists permitted to vote their sentiments.[108] The secessionists, however, brushed aside the complaints of their opponents.

Some days following the election, John Bell, the venerable Constitutional Unionist won over to secession by Fort Sumter, conceded that certain phases of the recent canvass were improper. "There never was an election without some degree of fraud, on one side or the other," he argued. Defending the practice that allowed volunteer companies to vote in their camps, he asserted that those entitled to vote in their home counties should be allowed to cast their ballot wherever they were. Bell observed that the "very term 'revolution' implied irregularity, and in a revolution it could not be otherwise."[109]

Before the June 8 referendum a group of perhaps fifteen prominent Knox County Unionists, including Parson Brownlow, Oliver Temple, John Baxter, and Connally F. Trigg, planned an East Tennessee convention to meet in Knoxville on May 30. Johnson, Nelson, and other speakers denounced the Harris "revolution" and berated his efforts to ally Tennessee with the Confederacy. This convention adjourned after establishing the machinery to hold another gathering at Greeneville on June 17, following the election. The Greeneville convention faced vastly different circumstances. The state had already signified its revolutionary intentions and those opposing secession therefore flirted

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[108] Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 20-21.

[109] Knoxville Register, June 13, 1861.

with treason. However, the secession crisis also had effaced decades of bitterness between Andrew Johnson and his old political adversaries, Nelson, Maynard, Brownlow, and other members of the Whig party.[110] During the opening session at Greeneville, Nelson, elected president earlier, arraigned the secessionists for preventing a fair election on the secession issue. He also denounced Harris for violating the constitution and finally proposed separate statehood for East Tennessee. After considerable debate the delegates eventually settled for a memorial petitioning the general assembly on the question of separate statehood. Ultimately, the convention's petition failed to win the necessary support. When the legislature reconvened in October, 1861, the protests over Harris' actions and the plea for separate statehood were totally rejected.[111] The die was cast. Tennessee left the Union on July 22, 1861, taking the eastern section with it.

How did the secessionist impulse triumph over the mind of the Tennessee Unionist? Why did the state secede despite the efforts of powerful leaders like Andrew Johnson, Thomas A. R. Nelson, Horace Maynard, and many, many others? Perhaps Isham G. Harris' deft

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[110]Upon hearing of an assassination plot against Andrew Johnson who was speaking at Kingston during the June referendum, Parson Brownlow sent his son to intercept the senator and bring him back to Knoxville by buggy over a secret route. Until that incident the two men had not spoken in twenty years. Temple, East Tennessee, 197-98n.

[111]Charles F. Bryan, Jr., "A Gathering of Tories: The East Tennessee Convention of 1860," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXXIX (1980), 27-48.

control of the machinery of state government provides one reason. With great skill, Harris and his minions used the various departments, legislature, militia, and even quasi-public agencies like the railroads to promote the rebel cause. For example, Sam Tate, president of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, tendered the free use of his line to the governor of Mississippi for the transportation of troops and the munitions of war.[112] Oliver P. Temple recalled that nearly every train that passed through his section on the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad carried troops on their way to Virginia during the spring and summer of 1861; this road, running from Georgia to Virginia, became "almost a continuous flame of secession fire." Union men soon learned to stay away from the stations.[113] Such situations could hardly have existed without the endorsement and active encouragement of Governor Harris.

Moreover, Harris carefully laid the framework of a revolutionary state government weeks in advance of the June referendum. He appointed military commissioners to negotiate an alliance with the Confederacy, established the command structure of the provisional army, and secured the ratification of a new national constitution, all with the state still in the Union and theoretically at peace with the United States.[114]

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[112]Memphis Appeal, March 2, 1861. In reference to the trains Governor Harris observed on October 7, 1861, that "almost their entire business for the last six months having been the transportation of troops and munitions of war." White, Messages, V, 349.

[113]Temple, East Tennessee, 187, 357-58. See also Cincinnati Enquirer, October 24, 1862.

[114]White, Messages, V, 292-303.

Another reason for the victory of the fire-eaters grew out of the confusion in the Union ranks and the absence of a titular head to coordinate the efforts of the loyalists. John Bell capitulated to the secessionist movement, thereby removing the natural leader of the Whig party. By defending the Union during the dark hours of the secession winter, Andrew Johnson received the patronage of the state from a grateful Lincoln administration. Yet this very situation seemed to divide and weaken the Union coalition. Many conservatives in Middle and West Tennessee were disheartened when they saw the Washington Republicans channeling jobs and appointments through the Democrats, Andrew Johnson and his cronies, lately Breckinridge supporters. Whig Congressman Robert Hatton of Wilson County complained of Johnson's new powers to a prominent constituent. "I agree with you that it is ruinous to our Cause for these men to be in situations, where they can war so successfully upon us."[115] A Nashville applicant, petitioning Johnson for a sinecure, held a different opinion. "Somebody has to and will hold the public office, and if a Democrat can do, why should he give way to a Know Nothing."[116] Nevertheless, the anger and resentment of the conservatives at Johnson's domination of the patronage surely contributed to serious disaffection in the Union ranks.[117]

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[115]Robert Hatton to William B. Campbell, January 24, 1861, Campbell Papers.

[116]Jesse B. Clements to Johnson, February 18, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 308.

[117]J. Milton Henry, "The Revolution in Tennessee, February, 1861 to June, 1861," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XVIII (1959), 99-119.

The Union cause in Tennessee was also hampered by the failure of a leader to emerge with the charisma and skill to counter the secessionists. Andrew Johnson, Thomas A. R. Nelson, and Horace Maynard were perhaps tainted in various degrees by the Lincoln administration. At least their years in Washington militated against them. Two Unionists who might have had the stature to build a loyal consensus were William H. Polk and William B. Campbell. The former, a Maury County resident and Mexican War veteran, was the brother of the late president, a former state legislator, diplomat, and Democratic Congressman. During the election of 1860, he supported Douglas.[118] Campbell, a Wilson County Whig, possessed similar credentials. He fought in the Seminole and Mexican wars. Later, he was elected to Congress and served as governor.[119] Neither of these individuals, however, demonstrated any willingness to lead in the face of Tennessee's secessionist movement. Polk was the chairman or president of the intimidated Union convention that hastily nominated Campbell for governor on May 2 and then speedily adjourned before the frowning Nashville secessionists could do them bodily harm. Ironically and significantly, Neill S. Brown, Balie Peyton, John S. Brien, and John Bell, all either rebels or despairing and silent Union Whigs, sent Campbell a communication urging him to accept the nomination. "We wish to assure you that you were the only man talked of, or thought of, from any quarter of the state." Impressed by the necessity of "placing in the executive

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[118] BDAC, 1468.

[119] McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 117-18.

chair of state, a man of the best experience in military affairs, with mature views also on the ordinary policy of the state," the old line Whigs described the nomination as the highest compliment ever paid to a Tennessean.[120] Campbell, however, declined to run, leaving the field to Polk, Parson Brownlow, Knoxville lawyer Conally F. Trigg, and Greeneville judge David Patterson, Andrew Johnson's son-in-law. Although he would later run against Harris in a losing contest, Polk, a Douglas Democrat, was not satisfactory to some East Tennsssee Whigs perhaps due to his unreliable views of banks and railroads. Brownlow withdrew his name from consideration, and Trigg and Patterson declined. In the latter case, Patterson's "connection with Andrew Johnson" destroyed his viability.[121] Thus Polk was left to sound the uncertain trumpet.

Campbell was circumspect and undemonstrative during the pivotal weeks before the June canvass. Although he corresponded frequently with other Unionists and expressed his continued faith and interest in the Union, his most trenchent statements were unpublicized.

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[120]Neill S. Brown, Balie Peyton, John S. Brien, and John Bell to Campbell, May 3, 1861, Campbell Papers. O. P. Temple believed that Peyton, a Gallatin attorney, and Brien, a Nashville lawyer and judge, "never became secessionists at heart, but their voices became silent." Neither could he believe John Bell to be a willing secessionist. "It was the panic of the hour that made him renounce the Union." And sadly the able and worthy Brown lacked the "boldness" and "unfaltering courage" needed for leadership. Temple, East Tennessee, 221, 236-38.

[121]William H. Polk to [George W. Bridges], July 13, 1861; George W. Bridges to Nelson, July 16, 1861, Nelson Papers; Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 27.

"Should I think proper to change my mind & conform to your wishes, I will write some," he told a confidant, in asking that his pro-Union statements not be quoted.[122] The Wilson County Whig reserved his most telling and revealing statements for an Alabamian who possibly held secessionist notions and probably saw no purpose in giving Campbell's views wide circulation. Warning that secession meant a military despotism, Campbell discounted the importance of personal liberty laws and insisted that their incompatibility with the Constitution was so obvious that any attempted enforcement would result in their annulment. Moreover, he argued that secession would imperil, not protect, slavery.

> As a pro-slavery man I repudiate the Southern move as unwise and impolitic, and, tending to the ruin and overthrow of negro slavery. . . . and jeopardize the liberty (such as our fathers and ourselves have enjoyed) of the white race of the Southern States. . . . The whole move is wrong and the South ought to retrace its steps.[123]

Had he stated his feelings more emphatically in a public forum, the Union men might have been able to rally around him. However, Campbell cultivated such a middle-of-the-road posture that Harris offered him the command of Tennessee's provisional army. Refusing, however, both the junior and senior major-general posts, Campbell "concurred heartily and cordially" in the selection of Gideon Pillow as the very best choice in the state, transparently pleading his own

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[122]William B. Campbell to W. P. Jones, December 19, 1860, Campbell Papers.

[123]Campbell to A. C. Beard, March 15, 1861, ibid.

lack of qualifications. Then in a curious statement, he seemed to contemplate renouncing his Union convictions.

> It will require, in this great emergency of our State, higher abilities than I possess to command her armies and to wield her brigades and divisions. I may enter the service of my State, but it will be in a subordinate capacity. My business [the Bank of Middle Tennessee] and the condition of my family forbid me leaving home immediately. Our State will need the services of all her sons, and mine shall be with her, in that capacity in which I think I can serve her best. I want no place or position in civil life, and I can give my person, at any moment as a soldier, when I shall be needed.[124]

That he maintained cordial relationships with old Whig friends who embraced Harris' revolution is certain. Barrow, Zollicoffer, Harding, and Henry all beseeched Campbell to come to Nashville and help them organize resistance "to repel the forces of the North, in a war which will soon be launched, full fledged, for the subjugation and humiliation of the South."[125] Just before the June referendum a list of persons described as "Old Guard Whigs" opposing Lincoln's war against the seceded states included that of William B. Campbell.[126] Thus the Union cause was leaderless and on the defensive in the summer of 1861, as Harris easily overwhelmed the extraneous candidacy of Polk.

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[124]Letter of Campbell, May 1, 1861, Athens Post, May 17, 1861. Before he took the position himself, Pillow pleaded with Campbell to accept the command, declaring, "if I should take the Field, I want you along." Gideon J. Pillow to Campbell, April 22, 1861, Campbell Papers.

[125]Washington Barrow to Campbell, April 29, 1861; Felix K. Zollicoffer, William G. Harding, and Gustavus A. Henry, May 2, 1861, to Campbell, ibid. At the same time, however, Unionists pleaded unsuccessfully with Campbell to run for governor and identify himself openly with the Union cause. William G. Brownlow to Campbell, May 6, 1861; W. R. Hurley to Campbell, May 20, 1861, ibid.

[126]Athens Post, May 31, 1861.

In a year of extraordinary events, the Unionists of East Tennessee made one last effort to prevent the secessionists from enjoying complete triumph. The loyalist element of the first, second, third, and fourth districts nominated Union candidates in the congressional elections held according to law on August 1, that year, but under the auspices of the newly designated Confederate state of Tennessee. Thomas A. R. Nelson and Horace Maynard defeated their rebel opponents in the first and second districts respectively. Maynard successfully slipped through the Confederate lines to Washington to take his seat.[127] Nelson, however, was arrested in Lee County, Virginia, on August 4, by a detachment of home guards and taken to Richmond. There he promised Jefferson Davis not to take up arms against the rebel government or actively to aid the Union cause. Davis thereupon permitted him to return to East Tennessee.[128] Two other Union congressmen, George W. Bridges and Andrew J. Clement of the third and fourth districts, eventually reached Washington to take their seats, the former arriving in the House just nine days before adjournment, February 23, 1863, having been under virtual house arrest by the East Tennessee rebels.[129]

Andrew Johnson, leaving his beloved Tennessee in a hail of bullets and a rain of curses, remaining unintimidated and ever hopeful

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[127]Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 28.

[128]Parole of Thomas A. R. Nelson, August 12, 1861; Nelson to Jefferson Davis, August 18, 1861, Nelson Papers, Fayetteville Observer, August 15, 1861.

[129]Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 28-29.

of his own and the Union's vindication, returned to his Senate seat in Washington.[130] There he immersed himself in the war effort and waited.

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[130]Johnson told a Richmond, Kentucky, gathering that the secessionists discharged at least thirteen shots at him "before he got out of Tennessee." Nashville Republican Banner, June 23, 1861.

CHAPTER II

THE REBEL ELITE AND THE POLITICS OF COERCION

By early 1862 Nashville was one of the largest and most important Confederate cities south of the Ohio River. Situated on the Cumberland, the city commanded the river traffic north to Cincinnati and Cairo and south to the interior of the Confederacy. In addition, various railroads fanned out to other cities: Louisville, Decatur, Chattanooga, and eventually to Knoxville, Atlanta, and beyond. Once seriously considered as a Confederate capital, Nashville was experiencing a wartime boom in the manufacture of military ordnance, munitions, and supplies, ranging from cannon to percussion caps and shoes. Not only did the city's location have strategic value, but its bustling workers, whirring machines, roaring forges, and bulging warehouses made it a highly desirable military prize.[1]

On a suddenly unseasonably mild Sunday on February 16, 1862, the city's muddy streets were clogged with all manner of vehicles, buggies, carriages, military wagons, carts, caissons, and ambulances. "Every available vehicle was chartered, and even drays were called

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[1]Stanley F. Horn, "Nashville During the Civil War," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, IV (1945), 7-8; Horn, The Army of Tennessee: A Military History (New York, 1941), 75; Cincinnati Enquirer, October 24, 1861.

into requisition, to remove people and their plunder, either to the country or to the depots."[2] Nashvillians were in a panic.

A familiar figure urged his horse through the melee. Catching sight of him, a pedestrian shouted a question: "What's the matter Governor--where are you going?" Tennessee's chief executive, Isham G. Harris, impatiently replied, "I've no time to talk, sir--all the papers from the capital are to be removed."[3] With that hurried remark, Harris, one of the skilled architects of Tennessee's secession, rushed away to try to salvage the state archives and escape the ignominy of capture by the Yankees! The Confederate forces were retreating. General Albert Sidney Johnston, commanding the demoralized Army of Tennessee, had abandoned Bowling Green, Kentucky, and his tired and dejected soldiers were streaming through the Nashville streets in retreat even as the governor passed on toward the capitol.

Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland had fallen to a combined Federal army and navy expedition, commanded by General U. S. Grant. Coming on the heels of a crushing defeat at the battle of Mill Springs on Fishing Creek in Kentucky, the reduction of the river forts removed the central pivot of General Johnston's defensive perimeter and left him in danger of being out-flanked in Kentucky. Consequently, Johnston ordered a retreat from the state with the news of the first Union success at Fort Henry on

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[2][John M. McKee], The Great Panic: Being Incidents Connected with Two Weeks of the War In Tennessee (Nashville, 1862), 11.

[3]Charleston Courier, February 24, 1862.

February 6, 1862. Headquartered in Nashville, Johnston had left the defense of the rivers to subordinate commanders who were unable to withstand Grant's naval and infantry assaults. In response to Confederate requests for negotiation and an armistice, Grant curtly replied, "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender." Suffering from intense cold, insufficient food, and withering fatigue, the Confederates surrendered Fort Donelson on February 16, 1862.[4] Nashville and Middle Tennessee were jeopardized.

Choosing to save his demoralized army rather than defend Nashville, General Johnston ordered his troops to evacuate the city immediately and take up defensive positions at Murfreesboro. John Berrien Lindsley, physician, minister, and chancellor of the University of Nashville, was so absorbed in caring for the wagon loads of dying and wounded men which had turned his academic halls into convalescent wards and operating rooms that he confessed "to be but little struck with the universal terror; it was not until my attention was called to it afterwards that I realized it."[5] Nashville waited apprehensively for the appearance of its conquerors.

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[4]Edwin C. Bearss, "Unconditional Surrender: The Fall of Fort Donelson," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXI (1962), 140-41. Historians have questioned Johnston's decision to leave the defense of the river to such men as he did. "John B. Floyd, the ranking officer, was the same muddleheaded incompetent who had been Secretary of War under Buchanan; the vain, hot-tempered Pillow fancied that his reputation as lawyer, planter, politician, with two Mexican War wounds, made him a general; and Buckner alone, a West Point graduate of ability, could be taken seriously." Allan Nevins, The War for the Union (4 vols., New York, 1958-71), II, 22.

[5]John Berrien Lindsley Diary (typescript, Tennessee State Library and Archives), 79. Dr. Lindsley, brother-in-law of

On February 23, the city's dispirited residents gathered along the river bank to watch the arrival of the Union troops. Reports that the Federals had reached the suburban areas had been circulating in the city since early that morning. Mayor Richard B. Cheatham crossed over the river in a small skiff to meet the Union commander (since the rebel authorities had senselessly destroyed both a fine suspension bridge and the railroad bridge). Agreeing to surrender the city formally on Tuesday, February 25, and receiving assurances that law-abiding citizens would be protected in their persons and property, the mayor returned to the Confederate shore to calm his citizens. He later issued a proclamation urging that business be resumed and that citizens return to their normal pursuits and he promised, optimistically, that county elections would take place on the regular day. He concluded with a plea that area farmers and suppliers immediately resume their trade with the townspeople, illustrating the practical effects of the state of seige on the city.[6]

Away in Washington, the power brokers had completed their search for the man to govern the new conquered territory. On

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Col. Randal W. McGavock, CSA (who helped construct Fort Donelson), offered his services as a volunteer surgeon in July, 1861, only to be rebuffed by the military authorities. Convinced that he was unwelcome in the Confederate armies, Lindsley returned to Nashville where he spent the war years preaching, caring for the wounded Confederate troops prior to Nashville's capitulation, and protecting the university's books and buildings.

[6]Horn, Army of Tennessee, 102-3; McKee, The Great Panic, 26; American Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events (42 vols., New York, 1862-1903), II, 596.

February 23, while still in mourning for the death of his twelve-year old son, Willie, Abraham Lincoln nominated Andrew Johnson military governor of Tennessee. Speculation that Johnson would be named military governor had surfaced even while Isham G. Harris was announcing the official removal of Tennessee's Confederate capital to Memphis. "Andy K. Johnson will probably proceed to Nashville, as soon as General Buell's army takes possession of that city, and assist in organizing a Provisional Government for Tennessee," the Cincinnati Enquirer revealed on Thursday, February 20. Andy Johnson was returning to Tennessee. "The people there are panting for freedom and a resumption of their connection with the Union."[7]

It was obvious to most observers that secession constituted the dominant political force in Nashville and Middle Tennessee at the beginning of the Federal occupation. Indeed, weeks after the arrival of northern troops, many Union citizens remained intimidated and undemonstrative. One commentator sensed the foreboding silence. "They still fear and the rebels still hope that our army will have reverses and that the confederate troops will return and occupy and control not only this city, but the State."[8] Thus the Lincoln

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[7]Long, The Civil War, 172-73; Cincinnati Enquirer, February 20, 1862. The extraneous "K" was apparently the result of a careless typesetter.

[8]John G. Nicolay to Salmon P. Chase, April 5, 1862, "Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1902 (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1903), II, 510.

administration's hopes for the recumbent Unionism of Tennessee rested on the blood, sinew, and iron of its military establishment and the political skills of Andrew Johnson.

From the outset the governor confronted the explosive problem of the proper approach to the many prominent Confederate leaders, partisans, and sympathizers residing in the area under Federal control. Naturally, the mayor as well as most city and county officials in Nashville and environs had patriotically supported the Confederacy. In addition, judges, newspaper editors, an ex-governor, and even the wife of the deceased James K. Polk were conspicuously redolent of rebel sympathies. Tennessee radicals clamored for retribution against the wealthy planters and public figures like John Overton, Washington Barrow, William G. Harding, and others whose financial and political support undergirded the Confederate experiment. Refugeeing in West Virginia, Robert S. Northcott, a Rutherford Countian, urged coercion and harsh treatment. Since a large number of rebels with substantial fortunes had contributed heavily to equip Confederate troops in Middle Tennessee, Northcott recommended rigorous punishment, including a heavy war levy, confiscation, and disfranchisement. "I respectfully call these things to your mind, knowing that you are in a position in which you can exercise an influence in controlling the policy of the government in regard to these matters."[9] Northern radicals watched suspiciously, hostile to the very concept of Lincoln's

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[9]Robert S. Northcott to Johnson, February 24, 26, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 160-61n.

provisional governments and uncertain of Andrew Johnson's intentions. "No one doubts his uncompromising Unionism," conceded a correspondent for Horace Greeley's New York Tribune, "but they fear his disposition to gain popularity with a class who have always hated and abused him."[10]

On March 18, 1862, six days after his arrival in Nashville to assume the office of military governor, Johnson issued an "Appeal to the People of Tennessee," tracing the unhappy course of secession and the calamitous condition of the great ship of state, "suddenly abandoned by its officers and mutinous crew." He held out the olive branch of amnesty to those who in a private and unofficial capacity had assumed an attitude of hostility to the Government. "The erring and misguided will be welcomed on their return." Although he frankly asserted that "it may become necessary, in vindicating the violated majesty of the law, and in reasserting its imperial sway, to punish intelligent and conscious treason in high places, no merely retaliatory or vindictive policy will be adopted."[11] If some Johnson partisans hailed the "appeal" as a meritorious state paper, the Nashville rebels did not, remaining sullen and unwilling to embrace the old Union, ever cognizant of the fluid nature of Federal lines and the possibility of the restoration of Confederate hegemony in the state. Lincoln's appointment was not universally

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[10] New York Tribune, May 2, 1862.

[11] Appeal to the People of Tennessee, March 18, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 210-11.

admired by the Unionists and the rebels seethed with anger. A Virginian, writing from Richmond, conceded most of Johnson's earlier arguments about the safety of slavery within the Union and the providential character of the American nation but he felt that the Tennessean misunderstood southern attitudes:

> Grant the truth of every position he advances: the North will not interfere with slavery. Granted! slavery is only safe in the Union. Admitted! the United States is the best fabrication of God and man. Be it so, but we do not choose it and no government can be so bad to free men as that they suffer by compulsion. Our rulers, our leaders and our representatives are all traitors! Agreed! we admit it, if it pleases you but they are our choice and we will have them. . . . I say again, the contest is now for self-government, and whatever the commencement that is now the only issue.[12]

Such an argument aptly characterizes the sentiment of the Tennessee Confederates with whom Johnson dealt. Without fully being able to cross the fundamental chasm forming the faultline between his Unionism and the revolutionary inclinations of the secessionists, the governor would seek "symbolic" or "ritual proof" mainly through using an oath of allegiance to show that the Union cause had been vindicated. The oath, an outgrowth of the national desire for security and conformity, would permit him to "punish" ritualistically those who refused to take the oath or who later proved false to its imperatives. Moreover, the oath would also provide a quasi-legal basis for the broad and ill-defined powers accorded him, especially with regard to his dealings with the "conscious and intelligent" traitors whose villainy had led "the erring and misguided" along their fateful path.

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[12]Knoxville Register, April 17, 1862.

Since both radicals and rebels raised fundamental questions about the legitimacy of military governments--the radicals to protest the usurpation of congressional authority by the executive branch and the rebels to denounce the Johnson regime as a tyranny and a humbug, the Tennessee War Democrat several times sought clarification concerning his powers, duties, and responsibilities.[13] Johnson's authority, described in a March 3, 1862, letter from Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, gave him "within the limits of that state, all and singular, the powers, duties and functions pertaining to the office of Military Governor (including the power to establish all necessary offices and tribunals . . .)."[14] Given the Tennessean's almost mystical reverence for the Constitution, the theoretical lack of limitations on his powers surely must have been a source of some personal concern.

Keenly aware of the controversial nature of his responsibility, Johnson contacted Return J. Meigs, a fellow Tennessean and a distinguished jurist living in exile in New York, almost immediately upon

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[13] See for example, Lincoln to Johnson, September 19, 1863, Roy P. Basler, ed., The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (9 vols., New Brunswick, N. J., 1953-55), VI, 469; Knoxville Register, May 8, 1862.

[14] Edwin M. Stanton to Johnson, March 3, 1862. Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 177. Both Lincoln and Johnson were in Congress when the United States experimented with the legal antecedent of the Lincoln provisional arrangement. During the Mexican War, the Polk administration established temporary military authorities in New Mexico and California. The legality of the California government was later upheld by the Supreme Court and the original administrative apparatus was still in place when the people in convention formed a government and entered the Union in 1850. Charles H. McCarthy, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction (New York, 1901), 12-13.

receiving his appointment. Meigs, a former Davidson County lawyer, philanthropist, and advocate of black colonization, urged Johnson to follow the policy of disarming the rebels, turning out disloyal office holders, and replacing the secesh with "a Union man in every official position in the state." He should assume that every present public official had sworn an oath to support the Confederacy. In that case the military governor would fill the offices with loyalists, conforming wherever possible to the applicable state laws and state constitution. Until the normal electoral process could be restored, the governor must regard the people "as refusing to exercise their authority to fill vacancies." In the area of elective positions, "you will be compelled to fill them, as military governor, under the executive authority to take care that the laws be faithfully executed."[15]

Johnson freely adopted the Meigs approach in his aforementioned "Appeal to the People of Tennessee," by stating that he would fill the offices temporarily until "the people can peaceably assemble at the ballot box and select agents of their own choice." He asserted that he would choose only those individuals of "probity and intelligence," who hold allegiance to the Constitution and the Federal government. These persons, appointed from among "my fellow citizens," would hold office until their places would be filled by "the action of the people."[16] Having set the stage using the Meigs formula,

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[15]Return J. Meigs to Johnson, March 15, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 205-7; McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 513.

[16]Appeal to the People of Tennessee, March 18, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 211.

Johnson moved to the next step, an exercise of symbolic coercion in which those loyal to the Confederacy would be separated from those loyal to the Union. The military government would know its friends by exacting a public or ritualistic assurance of loyalty. Symbolic coercion and the demand for ritual loyalty thus replaced the lost consensus of peacetime political arrangements. Contending against the residual partisanship of antebellum days and the deep divisions produced by the war, Johnson sought a workable arrangement for an almost impossible situation.

His instrument would be the oath of allegiance, providing both the symbolic coercion and the public assurance of loyalty needed to satisfy the northern radicals and the Tennessee Unionists.[17] At this

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[17] Listed below is a copy of a typical oath required of office holders in Nashville during the spring of 1862. Original in the possession of Mrs. Betsy Carrier, Bluff City, Tennessee.

State of Tennessee, _____ County.

On this, the _____ day of _____, 1862, personally appeared before me, _____ of the _____, and took and subscribed the following oath, in pursuance of the First Section of the Tenth Article of the Constitution of the State of Tennessee, which is as follows: "Every person who shall be chosen or appointed to any office of trust or profit under this Constitution, or any law made in pursuance thereof, take an oath to support the Constitution of this State and of the United States, and an oath of office," (he having already taken an oath to support the Constitution of Tennessee,) to-wit:

I, _____,
Do Solemnly Swear That I will support, protect and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States, against all enemies, whether domestic or foreign, and that I will

point, however, one must keep in mind that the nineteenth century attitudes toward oaths and paroles embodied a set of social, political, and legal imperatives almost foreign to the twentieth century. Soldiers violating a sworn oath or a written parole not to bear arms readily expected the severest penalty, including execution, should they be apprehended by the enemy. Those citizens swearing the oath of allegiance to the Union in hostile Tennessee risked their social standing and friendships and possibly endangered their lives whenever southern troops or guerrillas visited their neighborhoods. Consequently, the logic of symbolic coercion and the demand for the ritual proof of loyalty implicit and explicit in the various oaths of allegiance promulgated by the Lincoln administration and by the Johnson regime in Tennessee were matters of serious consideration. So strong were the legal implications that Meigs advised Johnson that whenever former rebel officials took the oath "you must leave them alone."[18]

> bear true faith, allegiance and loyalty to the same, any law, ordinance, resolution or convention to the contrary notwithstanding; and further: that I do this with a full determination, pledge and purpose, without any mental reservation or evasion whatsoever; and further: that I will well and faithfully perform all the duties which may be required of me by law. SO HELP ME GOD.
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> Sworn to and subscribed before me, _____

[18] Meigs to Johnson, April 3, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 208. Apparently the military governor mislaid Meigs' original correspondence and requested another copy. Obviously anxious to give his administration some semblance of legality, Johnson later published Meigs' letters in the newspaper. See Nashville Union, August 5, 1863.

Thus the legal ramifications of his actions and the use of paroles and oaths to buttress his anomalous position reflect Johnson's abiding concern with constructing an arrangement resting on actual and symbolic coercion and ritual assurances to replace the natural political process lost in the discord of secession and war. Andrew Johnson's pursuit of a new consensus may also indicate an expected if tragic misreading of the nature of civil war. One modern scholar has argued that all internal conflicts left societies deeply scarred and divided, thereby retarding or inhibiting the growth of a post-war consensus almost indefinitely. The original polarization between contending factions that produced the revolutionary situation or armed conflict therefore did not generally end with the conclusion of hostilities.[19] Consequently, the irreconcilable differences between the rebels and Union forces did not evaporate automatically with the capture of Nashville and would persist long past Appomattox. Nevertheless, the military governor would seek symbolic assurances through the oath that the Union cause was vindicated. Secessionist resistance and intransigence only heightened his need to punish ritualistically the rebel malefactors.

Anxious to restore the lost consensus, Johnson began the work of coercion almost immediately. On March 25, hardly two weeks after his arrival, he sent Nashville Mayor Richard B. Cheatham, members of the city council, policemen, firemen and other municipal officials

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[19]Harry Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal War," History and Theory, IV (1965), 122-23, and passim.

notice that they must take the oath of allegiance. Frustrated and startled by the governor's actions, the disgruntled city officials met on March 27 to draft a reply. Prior to the meeting, Cheatham and the council president had consulted with two lawyers who reportedly advised them that the Tennessee constitution did not require such an oath. Emboldened by their legal counsel and the almost unanimous consensus that Johnson's request was extraordinary and illegal, the mayor and his fellow officials answered "courteously and respectfully," asking to be excused from taking the oath of allegiance. The city officers declared that legal counsel had advised them that Johnson's order was unprecedented, that only state and county officials had heretofore sworn such an oath. Suggesting that the new governor suffered from a misapprehension concerning past practices, the respondents claimed never to have been required to swear "any oath inimical to our allegiance to the United States or the State Government."[20]

Here the Nashville officials played into Johnson's hands and helped fulfill his plan for public and ritual punishment to vindicate the Union. Had they subscribed to the oath, he would have been theoretically hard pressed to find reasonable grounds to remove them according to the Meigs doctrine. When the city officers declined, the way was open for him to declare the various municipal offices vacant and fill them with loyalists. Accordingly, on March 29,

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[20] Indianapolis Journal, April 2, 1862; Cincinnati Commercial, April 2, 1862; New York Tribune, April 3, 1862.

the governor directed the provost marshal, Colonel Stanley Matthews, to arrest Mayor Cheatham, charging him with refusal to take the oath, uttering treasonable and seditious language, and among other instances of malfeasance, inviting Jefferson Davis to take Nashville as his "permanent official residence."[21]

In the case of Cheatham, Johnson's quest for symbolic sanctions was thoroughly satisfied. Paroled by gubernatorial order, the rebel mayor temporized and delayed, but finally took the oath on May 12. Apparently properly chastened, he swore not to aid or encourage the rebellion and further promised to use his influence on those occasions deemed "discreet and profitable" to persuade his fellow Tennesseans to renew their loyalty. Otherwise, the governor's victories were meager in this first exchange with the Nashville elite. Only John E. Herman and William Cheatham, both aldermen; one councilman, William Shane; and several policemen came forward to take the oath. The remainder of the council refused to comply with the governor's wishes. Asserting that the recalcitrant officials had thereby evinced "such disloyalty and enmity" that they should no longer exercise the functions of government, Johnson declared their offices vacant and appointed a new mayor, John Hugh Smith, and a new city council on April 7, a move consistent with Meigs' earlier advice and a further example of the use of symbolic sanctions or coercion.[22] Whether

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[21] Johnson to Stanley Matthews, March 29, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 253.

[22] Richard B. Cheatham to Johnson, May 12, 1862, ibid., 379; clipping, Ex. Record Book (1862-1863), Andrew Johnson Papers, Library of Congress, hereafter cited as Johnson Papers; Louisville Journal,

or not the Nashville officials took the oath, the governor had symbolic evidence of the nature of their loyalty. Under constant pressure to suppress disloyal sentiment and the outspoken rebel leaders, Johnson continued his spring offensive against some of the more conspicuous elements of secessionist opinion.

The governor had already met with the existing Nashville newspaper editors and publishers on Saturday, March 15. All newspapers had been abandoned with the panic of Donelson's fall with "paper wet for the press, and manuscripts half set upon the cases." In the March 15 meeting, Johnson outlined the conditions under which continued publication would be permitted. The newly-born Nashville Times, "an independent journal" published by some of the employees of a defunct rebel organ, apparently felt that the terms were too stringent and closed with the thirteenth and last number on March 16. Two other papers, the Patriot and the Republican Banner, accepted Johnson's conditions and continued publication "on parole." George Baber, an editor of the Banner, expressed his willingness to comply. "Those restrictions I regard as wholly proper under the circumstances, and at no time have I felt inclined to violate them." Explaining that he had "an entirely satisfactory conversation" with the governor on the matter, Baber denied giving any aid or

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April 11, 1862. In describing the new mayor, a man of great corpulence and girth, a rebel editor could hardly find words of adequate measure for the "great mass of foul flesh and corruption--a Falstaff without the humor of a Falstaff," and finally, "this fattened mongrel of office, treason, strategy, and spoils!" Chattanooga Rebel, May 24, 1863.

comfort to the Confederate causes since the Federal occupation of Nashville.[23]

Despite Baber's disclaimers, however, contemporaries complained that papers like the Banner and the Patriot trumpeted "discordant notes" and stood as "unreliable sentinels." On April 12, Baber was arrested on the charge of uttering "treasonable and seditious language." Thereafter, the military governor proceeded to silence the remaining publications and publishing concerns not meeting his approval. Acting under the general terms of the Federal Confiscation Act of August 6, 1861, U. S. Marshal E. R. Glascock seized the offices and presses of the Republican Banner, Union and American, Gazette, and the Southern Methodist Publishing Company on May 24. Two days later the Patriot and the Baptist Publishing Company fell victim to the same proceedings.[24]

Although the seizure of the Methodist and Baptist printing establishments would be regarded as another example of Johnson's despotism, the governor's new Union organ denounced the religious

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[23]Athens Post, April 11, 1862; Nashville Times, March 18, 1862; Louisville Journal, March 25, 27, 29, 1862; Baltimore American, March March 29, 1862; John Wooldridge, History of Nashville (Nashville, 1890), 358.

[24]Joseph Ramsay to Johnson, April 12, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 300; American Annual Cyclopaedia, II, 764, 766; Athens Post, June 13, 1862. Charging that the governor had imposed conditions "more suitable to the empire of France, whose imperial despot has banished a free press," the Patriot's editor declared that "we abdicate the tripod, with a scorn of servility which no power on earth can repress, and without an emotion of regret." Nashville Patriot quoted in New York World, March 25, 1862.

publishers as "perhaps the most reckless and incendiary" partisans of the Rebellion. One of them, the Reverend Mr. James R. Graves, owner of the Baptist Publishing Company and editor of the defunct Tennessee Baptist tabloid, reportedly manufactured a unique nine-foot lance or pike, designed for use with a short gun. "Its wound at once paralyzes the enemy, and it is of the most fatal character." Besides his murderous weapon the Reverend Mr. Graves, having escaped Nashville just ahead of the Federals, tendered his military services to the Confederacy. "Tis Caesar's right, in a crisis like this, to call to the field every man able to bear arms, nor has Christ absolved his ministers from the tribute to Caesar."[25] Although Graves escaped before the military governor could dispense his unique justice, others like George Baber remained to face sanctions.

Baber, perhaps so typical of those pre-war Unionists who reluctantly embraced the Confederacy only after Lincoln's call to arms and Tennessee's secession, contended that he had no real choice but to join his friends and neighbors in the rebel cause. Like other Tennesseans "whose interests and destiny seemed linked inseparably with the State," he simply and unhappily acquiesced in the flow of events. Arrested for his pro-secessionist course,

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[25]William Crowell to Johnson, April 17, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 304-5; Athens Post, June 13, 1862; Nashville Union, May 27, 1862; Richmond Examiner, April 12, 1862; Charleston Courier, March 20, 1862. The Reverend Mr. James R. Graves and the legendary Parson William G. Brownlow engaged in a rancorous religious feud during the 1840's and 1850's over doctrinal differences between the Baptist and Methodist churches, especially the proper mode of baptism, whether by sprinkling or immersion. Coulter, Brownlow, 67-83.

the editor soon promised to become a supporter of the Union and later publicly advocated "the speedy restoration" of normal relations with the Federal government. Upon taking the requisite oath, Baber attended a Union rally in Pulaski on June 17, where he clearly recanted his previous views. "The companions of my boyhood and the aged counselors around me joined the frenzied multitudes that raised the voice of rebellion." Now convinced of the reckless course of the Confederate cause, Baber urged his fellow Tennesseans to rejoin him in "the American Destiny."[26]

By the instrumentality of the oath Johnson had won another symbolic victory. Yet he pursued a dangerous and crisis ridden path. Should he "put the screws" too tightly, the governor risked the danger of alienating others whom he sought to convert. Too mild a policy, however, would raise the radical hue and cry that the War Democrat was coddling traitors. In his widely circulated "Appeal to the People of Tennessee," Johnson had promised "no merely retaliatory or vindictive policy." Nonetheless, he emphasized the necessity of "vindicating the violated majesty of the law" and reasserting "its imperial sway."[27] Again the instrument would be the oath and the goal a symbolic victory over the "intelligent and conscious" rebel

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[26]Louisville Journal, June 20, July 9, 1862; Nashville Union, June 20, 1862; American Annual Cyclopaedia, II, 766. Baber shortly proved to be once more a faint-hearted Unionist. He later moved to Ohio where he edited the Dayton Empire, which supported Vallandigham. Nashville Union, October 3, 1863.

[27]An Appeal to the People of Tennessee, March 18, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 209-12.

leaders to restore and vindicate "the violated majesty of the law," the Constitution, and the Union.

Johnson's carefully chosen targets would be some of Middle Tennessee's most prominent rebels and members of its social and political elite, individuals like Washington Barrow, the Davidson County lawyer and state senator, one of three men commissioned to conclude a military league with the Confederacy prior to Tennessee's secession. Other notables included ex-governor Neill S. Brown, chancery judge Joseph C. Guild, and William G. Harding, all leading citizens and members of the state military and financial board which had coordinated Tennessee's war effort in the Confederacy.

Aware that the presence of several "conspicuous" rebel leaders in the Nashville area constituted a serious political problem for his provisional government, Johnson ordered a series of highly publicized arrests, coincidental with the dismissal of the Nashville city officials and the suppression of the pro-Confederate newspapers and publishing houses. On March 31, he ordered the arrest and confinement of Davidson County state senator Washington Barrow. To the delight of Unionists and the consternation of rebels, Johnson charged Barrow, one of the leading statesmen of Tennessee rebeldom, with "treasonable language." Imprisoned briefly, he was apparently released or paroled the next week on Lincoln's orders.[28] Despite the president's intervention, however, the military governor would

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[28]Johnson to Stanley Matthews, March 31, 1862, ibid., 261; McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 30-31.

eventually have his symbolic vindication of "the violated majesty of the law." He resolved to punish Barrow and the others in a dramatic fashion. Consequently, with only the most rudimentary instructions on the nature and extent of his responsibilities, the canny Tennessee politician played out the meagre hand given him.

Having momentarily dealt with Barrow, the Tennessee chief executive moved to "coerce" three other equally offensive remnants of Isham G. Harris' rebel regime, all being members of the state military and financial board. The miscreants were William G. Harding, Joseph C. Guild, and Neill S. Brown--two "cotton Whigs," Harding and Brown, and Guild, a Democrat.

The governor authorized the arrest of all three individuals, beginning with Harding, one of the state's richest planters and patriarch of Belle Meade, a richly endowed Nashville area estate (now called the "Queen of Tennessee Plantations"). Second in wealth only to the elusive John Overton who had decamped just ahead of the Federal troops, Harding reputedly raised $500,000 to equip Tennessee volunteers and defend Nashville.[29] Such use of his largesse, his position in the Harris government, and certainly his potential influence were probable reasons for the military governor's actions. Indeed the presence of noted, staunch, and uncontrite secessionists

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[29]"His celebrated mansion Belle Meade and all its appurtenances would, in many respects, vie with those of the old manorial estates of the English barons." Stables of blooded horses and herds of valuable cattle, "elegant deer," Cashmere goats, and even genuine plains buffalo roamed the plantation. John Fitch, Annals of the Army of the Cumberland, 635. Ridley Wills, II, "Letters from Nashville, 1862, I: A Portrait of Belle Meade," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXXIII (1974), 71.

left unencumbered "to vent their offensive opinions" particularly galled the radicals.[30] Arrested April 2, upon Johnson's order, Harding spent several weeks at the state penitentiary on Church Street following his confinement beginning April 6. Despite the public outcry the planter remained imprisoned in Nashville until April 20. Apparently seeking to make an example, the military governor sent the unrepentant Harding to a Federal prison on Fort Mackinac Island, Michigan, where the accommodations supposedly would be somewhat more spartan than his palatial Belle Meade.[31] To keep Harding company in this highly publicized expatriation of traitors, the governor chose two companions, the aforementioned Barrow and Guild.

Unlike the other members of the state military and financial board, Guild was a Democrat, steeped in the nationalistic tradition of Felix Grundy and Andrew Jackson. A respected Sumner County jurist and judge of the chancery court, Guild had opposed disunion in the lost opportunities of the secession winter of 1861. However, his sympathies were drawn to the South when his sons and other kin fell into the orbit of the Confederacy. During the first few weeks after the Federal occupation of Middle Tennessee, rebel guerrilla bands infested Gallatin, Sumner County, and the area north of Nashville. Many persons believed that Guild and other Sumner countians

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[30] New York Tribune, May 2, 1862.

[31] Wills, "Letters from Nashville," 71; Order for the Arrest of William G. Harding, April 2, 1862, Johnson Papers; Johnson to Stanley Matthews, April 16, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 304.

were aiding their depredations.[32] Subsequently, Guild came under Johnson's scrutiny. The governor would have to act although the judge was a former political ally; consequently he ordered Guild's immediate arrest on April 11. Judge Guild remonstrated with the arresting officer, declaring that "the Court is in session," and "surely you will allow me to sign the records." His protests notwithstanding, the angry and chagrined jurist was allowed to sign the records, but at the provost marshal's office rather than at the courthouse. Guild, Barrow, and Harding were not the only prominent area rebels to incite the military governor to action.

Ex-governor Neill S. Brown was a Whig stalwart, having been three times a presidential elector. Arrested on May 14 and later paroled to conclude some private business, Brown carefully evaluated his options, and then took the oath of allegiance, proving that "'tis better to throw stones than grass."[34] Brown momentarily became a conspicuous spokesman for the Union, attending a rally and making a speech. At Columbia, on June 2, he pronounced the rebellion "a

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[32]Philadelphia Press, October 22, 1862; Cincinnati Commercial, March 29, 1862; undated newspaper clipping, George B. Guild Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives. Guild, a gifted storyteller and stump speaker, owned a grand estate in Gallatin "well stocked with blooded horses, Devonshire cattle, Cashmere goats, & c."

[33]Johnson to David R. Haggard, April 11, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 295. Nashville Union, May 9, 1862.

[34]McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 86-87; Emerson Etheridge to Johnson, June 9, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 459.

failure."[35] Like many of his fellow Whigs, the ex-governor had resisted the fire-eaters until Lincoln's call for troops polarized Tennessee politics. At that point, he, too, had joined the parade for Jeff Davis, being one, as a contemporary observed, "wanting in the boldness necessary for a leader."[36]

Perhaps reflecting the wishful thinking of outraged Tennessee rebels, a bizarre story concerning Johnson's death at Brown's hands circulated in southern newspapers throughout the eastern Confederacy over a period of weeks. Apparently invented by a man claiming to be a refugee from Nashville recently arrived in Atlanta, the purported assassination was first carried in one of that city's newspapers and then reprinted over the South. The alleged eyewitness reported that at Brown's arraignment before Johnson on June 5, the Whig ex-governor suddenly drew a revolver and shot several times, instantly killing his old political enemy. According to the story, Brown was summarily hanged one half hour later. A Tennessee editor just beyond the Federal lines discounted the rumored assassination, sneeringly declaring that "it could have never been intended that Andy Johnson should die by the hand of a gentleman."[37]

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[35]Nashville Union, June 3, 1862. Brown later claimed that the newspaper "misrepresented" his remarks at Columbia, according to a rebel lady. In reality, being still true to the South, "he wished only to impress upon the people of Tenn., the fact, of the hopelessness of their cause, before they were forced into measures." Elizabeth M. Harding to William G. Harding, July 4, 1862, Harding Family Papers, Vanderbilt University Library, Nashville, Tennessee.

[36]Temple, East Tennessee, 237-38.

[37]Charleston Courier, June 11, 1862; Lynchburg Virginian, June 9, 17, 20, 1862; Athens Post, June 13, 1862.

Brown temporarily submitted to Johnson's coercion, took the oath, and for a short time escaped further harassment.[38] However, the predictable intransigence of the rebel trinity of Harding, Guild, and Barrow provided an excellent opportunity for the war governor to dramatize colorfully the hazards of resistance. Symbolically, Johnson's vindication of the Union was a personal triumph in this particular case. In choosing to punish the three men by sending them to a northern prison, the governor could isolate the trio from their neighbors, deprive them of a symbolic martyrdom among their more sympathetic fellow rebels, and at the same time, flamboyantly demonstrate to the entire nation the primacy of "the sacred majesty of the law."[39]

With the prison still in the latter stages of construction, the Tennesseans were lodged temporarily in one of the leading hotels at nearby Detroit until their living quarters could be readied. Soon the Detroit Advertiser, the Free Press, and other newspapers were carrying stories of the prominent rebel prisoners who freely moved about the city, reportedly debating the issues of the day and conversing with leading citizens of both parties. Samuel C. Mercer

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[38]Eventually, however, Brown's "unionism" subsided and he was sent South on May 6, 1863, due to a recurring bout of disloyalty. Washington Chronicle, May 7, 1863; New York World, May 7, 1863.

[39]Edwin M. Stanton to Johnson, April 10, 1862, Johnson Papers. Elizabeth M. Harding, writing to her husband, assured him that "if Buell had been here, he would have never permitted your removal from Tenn. nor indeed your arrest at all, after the assurances given you." Elizabeth M. Harding to William G. Harding, July 24, 1862, Harding Papers.

the radical editor of Johnson's Nashville organ, condemned the manner in which Federal army officers seemingly lionized the treasonable threesome, shamelessly "gallanting them through the pleasant streets of Detroit, and treating them to wine suppers, and escorting them to balls and theatres." Mercer mockingly demanded similar treatment and incarceration at Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, or even Niagara Falls![40]

Johnson responded sharply, effectively placing the blame elsewhere for any leniency accorded the political prisoners. The governor dispatched a letter to Secretary of War Stanton, complaining that they should not be allowed to roam at large in Detroit. "I feel well assured it is not by your authority," for such treatment accorded these individuals had "increased rather than diminished secession sentiments." Although he planned to send other prisoners North, in view of the publicity he would wait until the secretary resolved the problem.[41]

Stanton immediately ordered the three rebels into "close custody." A humiliated prison commander, Captain Grover S. Wormer, explained that while proper quarters were being readied, "I allowed them to go to the hotel to board and lodge, under guard of one sergeant and three men." Otherwise, the three prisoners of state

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[40]Nashville Union, May 6, 7, 1862.

[41]Johnson to Stanton, May 6, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 365-66.

remained at Fort Mackinac.[42] Thereafter, the issue of the treatment of the three men quietly subsided. Although the arrest of these members of the rebel elite had been well-publicized, their subsequent release at different intervals that fall received less attention and illustrated Johnson's skill at achieving the appropriate symbolic victory at minimum political cost.

Joseph C. Guild quietly obtained his freedom by signing a parole on August 1, posting a $10,000 bond countersigned by two Middle Tennessee Unionist friends, Balie Peyton and John S. Brien. Upon the judge's return to Tennessee, Johnson permitted him to execute another bond for $10,000, thereby releasing Peyton and Brien from their obligation.[43] Upon his release, the judge, "a great story teller, and jocular upon all occasions," reported to the capitol. "After a private interview with the Governor, he took a chair, and, in the most humorous manner, gave some of his experience[s]."[44]

In the case of Harding, Johnson also appears to have been more flexible than his public posture might have suggested. Until late summer when Buell's desperate foragers virtually pillaged Belle Meade

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[42]Stanton to Johnson, May 6, 1862, Johnson Papers; Grover S. Wormer to William Hoffman, June 3, 1862, War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vol. in 126, Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. 2, III, 636, hereafter cited as OR. Writing to his relative, Randal McGavock, Harding seemed in good spirits and described their condition positively. "Each have separate rooms, the scenery beautiful and climate charming in summer." Herschel Gower and Jack Allen, eds., Pen and Sword: The Life and Journals of Randal W. McGavock (Nashville, 1959), 646-47.

[43]Parole and Bond of Joseph C. Guild, August 1; October 6, 1862, Johnson Papers.

[44]Philadelphia Press, October 22, 1862.

in the course of the army's race for Louisville, the governor apparently sought to protect the plantation and even promised to permit Mrs. Harding to visit her husband in Detroit. "I believe he has unbounded influence, in regard to Tenn. matters, with the authorities at Washington," she confided to Harding, "and if he should use it in good faith, I will get a permit to visit you." Despite her fears and dread, she sought an interview with the governor on June 28, and asked permission to travel to Harding's prison. To her great relief, "he received me as courteously as possible, and assured me he would do all in his power, to facilitate my wishes." Moreover, the governor promised to provide the documents or letters to allow Mrs. Harding to travel and "spoke of you in terms, highly gratifying to a wife's pride, and so agreeably disappointed me." True to his word, Johnson obtained the necessary permission for her to travel within two weeks. She planned to leave on July 22.[45]

"Gov. Johnson has promised me, his influence to have you paroled, to stay at the hotel while I remain, and I suppose he can effect it," she reported. "I believe it so strongly that I take the children with perfect confidence." John Morgan and other Confederate raiders, however, interrupted Mrs. Harding's plans to begin her journey to the North.[46] With tracks torn asunder, bridges burned, and a vital

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[45]Elizabeth M. Harding to William G. Harding, May 31, July 12, June 29, 1862, Harding Papers.

[46]Elizabeth M. Harding to William G. Harding, July 12, 17, 1862, ibid. During the middle of August, Mrs. Harding and the children apparently started on the trip to Fort Mackinac only to find the rail connections out of commission between Nashville and Louisville. See Randal M. Ewing to Harding, August 17, 1862, ibid.

tunnel blocked, the Federal supply line was virtually destroyed. As a result, Buell's critical subsistence and commissary problems raised additional concerns for the mistress of Belle Meade.

Apprehensive over the possibility that the estate's blooded breeding stock and race horses might be seized, Mrs. Harding traveled to Nashville on August 5 to see Johnson. "I represented to him how unprotected the place was, that you had valuable and favorite horses, unfit for cavalry purposes, and yet I feared were in danger." The governor reportedly explained that whenever a person's goods or livestock were impressed the army would issue a certificate of value, obligating the government to pay the claimant at a future date. To soothe her fears Johnson further agreed to provide a statement of protection, phrased "as I understand him, 'No person shall molest or take anything away from Gen. H's plantation, without first coming to me.'" However, the deteriorating military situation and the press of business resulted in the governor's sending only a general proclamation cut from a newspaper rather than the promised document.[47]

Writing to the exiled plantation owner, Randal M. Ewing, a Williamson county lawyer and family intimate, reported on August 28 that despite daily losses of poultry, pork, mutton, hay, and grain, "Your plantation has suffered less than any other one in the country, owing perhaps to the interference in your behalf of Gov. Johnson, who has exhibited (perhaps as far as he could consistently) a disposition to make the blow upon you as light as possible--for the

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[47]Elizabeth M. Harding to William G. Harding, August 5, 1862, ibid.

present at least." Ewing applied gentle pressure to help persuade Harding to sign a parole offered by the military governor. "I do not know that your presence at home could do any good, but at all events you wuld be able to see and be satisfied that no prudence, courage, zeal or effort can protect the place from these requisitions, and it might have a tendency to show you that the best has been done for you by your friends that could be done." Explaining the parole tendered to Harding, the Williamson lawyer stated that the signer would be bound not to aid or assist the rebellion, directly or indirectly. On the other hand, the parole was certainly no oath of allegiance but merely a guarantee that Harding would not use his liberty to destroy the government. "Gov. Johnson informs your friends that he is willing that you should return home on this parole and have time given to you to look around you, and make up your mind as to your future conduct." Should Harding then decide "to sacrifice everything, for the cause of Southern Independence," he could surrender his parole and return to prison. Encouraged by Johnson's explanations, Ewing assured the exiled rebel that his friends believed that "you may give the parole required without any sacrifice of Honor." Whether he was convinced by his friends' assurances, his wife's entreaties, or by Guild's earlier defection, Harding gave the required parole in September and returned to Belle Meade. When Federal soldiers plundered the plantation during Buell's movement into Kentucky, he sought and got federal protection. With other rebel luminaries, Andrew Ewing and John Overton, Harding filed claims against the government for property, livestock, and subsistence

lost to the federal troops. The Belle Meade owner claimed $32,000 in damages--and was awarded $27,617, although it cannot be determined whether he ever received the money.[48]

Indicted for treason in 1863, Harding avoided trial by taking Lincoln's amnesty oath on February 4, 1864. In the fall of 1863, he had allegedly approached the governor to inveigh against the policy of enlisting blacks in military service, protesting that Tennessee would become "the theatre of indiscriminate violence, robbery, rape, bloodshed and every species of outrage perpetrated by negro soldiers." With a curious and expectant group of bystanders looking and listening, Johnson responded with a severe lecture, denouncing him for having used his largesse to aid the Confederacy. "Sir, if I had done what you have done, my hands and every thread of my garments would seem to blush with the blood of my murdered countrymen."[49]

Whether Johnson ever regretted his own private assistance to the Hardings is not known. In this case, as in others, he tended to cloak his own charity in guile and demogoguery, allowing a favorite scribe to report that Mrs. Harding had written the governor "a doleful epistle" but not ever explaining the nature of her request

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[48]Ewing to Harding, August 28, 1862, ibid.; Wills, "Letters from Nashville," 78-82; Herschel Gower, "Belle Meade: Queen of Tennessee Plantations," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXII (1963), 203, 207-15; Board of Claims Record Book, Nashville and Vicinity (March 13, 1863, to October 1, 1863), 10, 13, 24, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

[49]Nashville Times and True Union, May 2, 1864; Nashville Union, August 19, 1863.

or revealing his role in assisting the mistress of Belle Meade.[50] Perhaps the height of his use of demogoguery occurred in the canvass of 1864, when the governor made his celebrated speech to the Nashville freedmen, climaxing a colorful, uproarious, and even riotous torch-lit procession, after which a self-proclaimed Moses of "this enthralled race" promised "a fair start and an equal chance in the great race of life." In the course of his remarks, bitter in their raw appeal to class consciousness, racial taboos, and radical solutions, Johnson pilloried the rebel aristocracy. "I am no agrarian, but if the princely plantation of Wm. G. Harding, who boasted that he had disbursed over $5,000,000 for the rebel Confederacy, were parceled out among fifty loyal, industrious farmers, it would be a blessing to our Commonwealth."[51]

Through its wide distribution, this notorious speech surely helped foster an extremist image of the governor in the minds of the radical wing of the Republican party.[52] It is important to recall, however, that Harding had taken Lincoln's amnesty oath in February, 1864, thereby securing a full pardon and the restoration of all property rights, except slaves.[53] In this particular case,

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[50]Philadelphia Press, October 22, 1862.

[51]Speech to Colored Men of Nashville, October 24, 1864, Nashville Times and True Union, October 25, 1864.

[52]Chattanooga Gazette, October 28, 1864; Philadelphia Press, November 5, 1864; Nashville Press, October 26, 1864, and other papers carried reports of the speech.

[53]See Annual Message to Congress, December 8, 1863, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 54-55; McCarthy, Lincoln's Plan of

Johnson's apparent call for confiscation and land distribution should be regarded as so much campaign rhetoric and hyperbole. The governor well understood that Harding was a safe although popular target.

Washington Barrow, unlike his compatriots, refused to strike his colors. Perhaps due to Lincoln's earlier intervention, he may have wanted to try the same Washington connection. He carried on considerable correspondence with various departments, including war and state, before Johnson requested his discharge in November, 1862, pending the execution of heavy bond. However, Barrow was not immediately released but sent to Fort Jackson, near Sandusky, Ohio. After a short time in that prison, he was exchanged in a group of other "political prisoners" in March, 1863, at City Point, Virginia. Paroled to remain within the southern lines, this unreconstructed rebel was later urged to seek the Tennessee governor's chair since Harris could not constitutionally succeed himself. Barrow, however, remained in obscure exile until Lee's surrender, whereupon he returned to Nashville, reportedly broken in health.[54]

Operating by a pre-arranged plan, according to one observer, the Tennessee governor continued to awe, coerce, exile, or imprison various elements of the local power structure, requiring oaths of allegiance and sometimes cash bonds of varying amounts for good

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Reconstruction, 24-29; Nashville Times and True Union, May 2, 1864. Harding took the oath on February 2, 1964, effectively quashing treason proceedings against himself.

[54] OR, Ser. 2, IV, 618, 760; VII, 805; Athens Post, May 1, 1863; Nashville Press and Times, October 22, 1866.

behavior from lawyers, bankers, merchants, ministers, physicians, and other groups whose loyalty was questionable. The Reverend Dr. Robert B. C. Howell, minister of the First Baptist Church, described the military governor as vowing to "take the people by classes, and demand the oath of them all." In isolated incidents the governor or the military vigorously applied the technique of symbolic coercion, sometimes arresting individuals, assorted groups, and even industrialists accused of manufacturing muskets, cannon, and cannon balls for the rebel army, and at other times simply harassing minor figures. In one instance, certain "weak fellows were collared, scared, and released with a reprimand."[55] By June 5, 1862, Johnson was proclaiming to President Lincoln that he had arrested over seventy "vile secessionists" who would be sent beyond the Federal lines and treated as spies should they return without taking the required oath.[56] The process of coercion seemed to be acquiring a momentum of its own with many ramifications, social, political, and economic.

"The Great Panic" or "Stampede" that followed the Confederate evacuation of Nashville also caused the removal of most of the specie deposited in the various banks. The scarcity of specie and negotiable currency visited severe economic hardship, confusion, and

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[55]Unpublished memorial, First Baptist Church Records, 1820-1863, Nashville, Tennessee, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Cincinnati Enquirer, April 6, 1862; Baltimore American, April 11, 1862. The board of aldermen amended the city revenue laws, requiring the oath of allegiance for new business licenses and for renewals of old ones. See Nashville Dispatch, June 11, 1862; Nashville Union, June 12, 1862.

[56]Johnson to Lincoln, June 5, 1862; Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 445-46.

a great business depression upon Nashville and the area within the Federal lines. Confederate scrip rapidly depreciated, and the removal of specie from the state and private banks made those currencies of dubious value. In the case of the state Bank of Tennessee, its specie, paper, records, and similar effects were transferred to Columbia. Other institutions moved their assets to places further South beyond the reach of the Union army.[57]

Only the Planters' Bank and the Union Bank, whose stock was owned mostly by northern and European investors, remained in the city when the Federals arrived. The management felt relatively secure in staying and re-opening at the earliest opportunity; however, other banks soon renewed operations under the watchful eye of Federal authorities. Business continued depressed due to various legal, military, and monetary complications. Also, there was always the question of loyalty.[58]

When, in late April, the governor received word that a cashier at the Bank of Tennessee then operating at Columbia had been accepting Confederate notes on bank debts he placed the offending party under

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[57]Nashville Times, February 28, 1862.

[58]Nashville Dispatch, May 9, 1862; Louisville Journal, June 24, 1862; Washington Chronicle, March 6, 1863. By early summer the Planters' Bank currency was discounted 25 percent. All other redeemable Tennessee bank currency exchanged at discount rates ranging from 33 to 50 percent. Almost a year later the state, the Planters', and the Union banks were still solvent, their notes commanding a premium and, all importantly, acceptable in the purchase of cotton. Parson Brownlow, however, predicted ruin, observing that ex-President Buchanan owned 130 shares of Union Bank stock.

arrest and considered seizing the entire assets of the bank.[59] Yet once again Johnson resorted to a less extreme form of coercion. Rather than confiscation he simply ordered all banking officials and employees to take the oath of allegiance.[60] Two Union Bank officers, Daniel F. Carter and John Herriford, somewhat peremptorily declined and soon found themselves in jail. Other bankers temporized, asserting that taking the oath would jeopardize those assets lying beyond the Federal lines. Upon learning that the various bank officers had embraced the Union cause the Confederate government could seize the assets in question.[61] "In the opinion of the Governor," an administration spokesman retorted, "the object you have in view, namely, the recovery of the assets of your Bank, can in no manner be so effectively accomplished as by the speedy restoration of law and order and the renewal of allegiance and loyalty by the people now in rebellion against the Government of the United States."[62]

Despite the extreme punishments often threatened by the Tennessee governor, the final resolution of the issues provoking his

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[59]William H. Polk to Johnson, April 28, 1862, Johnson Papers; Johnson to James S. Negley, April 29, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 349.

[60]Memphis Argus, May 28, 1862; Louisville Journal, May 28, 1862; [Edward H. East] to President, Cashier, Teller, and Clerks of Planters' Bank, May 17, 1862, Johnson Papers.

[61]Louisville Journal, May 28, 1862. One allegedly love-struck teller supposedly explained his reluctance to take the oath by admitting that his sweetheart "avows she will not marry him if he does." Savage, Andrew Johnson, 258.

[62]Edward H. East to Nashville Bank Officials, May 23, 1862, Johnson Papers.

polemics often was less rigorous than his language promised. Such was the case with the bankers. Johnson quite readily paroled several of the officers arrested upon their refusal to take the oath, permitting them time for reflection and opportunity to put their affairs in order. Many eventually complied.[63] Even Messrs. Carter and Herriford apologized for any misunderstanding, saying that "we are willing to enter into an obligation to obey the laws and Government of the United States with security for the faithful performance of the same."[64] Several others, having placed their valuables beyond the governor's reach, fled South or to Canada. The remainder apparently took the oaths.[65] Johnson later made his longtime friend and confidant Samuel Milligan, a Greeneville lawyer, "Supervisor of Banks." Milligan's duties were unclear since the Tennessee executive apparently created the job for his Greeneville crony to relieve his financial distress, making him "a sort of supernumerary clerk" in the governor's office.[66] However, Johnson made no further documented attempts to seize or sequester the assets of the various banks, apparently preferring the use of the oath to the rigors of confiscation.

Due to the relentless scrutiny and unflagging interest imposed on the Tennessee situation by the curious, Johnson was under terrific

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[63]Louisville Journal, May 28, 1862.

[64]Daniel F. Carter and John Herriford to Johnson, May 23, 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 412, 426.

[65]Louisville Journal, May 28, 1862.

[66]Samuel Milligan Memoir, 1863-69, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

pressure to deal harshly with the rich and powerful.[67] Typical are the complaints of the post commander of the Federal forces stationed at Pulaski, Colonel Marcellus Mundy of the Twenty-Third Kentucky Volunteer Regiment, who wrote the governor that "men go at large in this community who publicly contributed their means and influence to fill the ranks of the rebel army." Therefore "I would advise that every one of them be arrested and removed from this community until a healthy tone can be reestablished among the people." Other citizens would return to their old allegiance "but they fear that such and such men who are rich and influential would work against them, mark them for future punishment, and frown upon them as neighbors."[68] Such seemed to be the case when Thomas W. Spivey, a loyal citizen of Franklin, reported that he had been assaulted on the public square the day previous by William Ewing, a member of the Confederate legislature and an ex-captain in the rebel army. "I raised to my feet & returnd the blow which brought him to the Bricks." Spivey felt that such men as Ewing should be obliged to give some security since "he has nothing against me except that . . . I have adhered to the union." Furthermore, "I say to you now Governor that

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[67]A northern journalist on the scene in Nashville reported earlier that his faith had been "mightily shaken in the policy of leniency." Highly critical of any apparently non-punitive approach, he observed that conciliation did not work. "The more an active traitor finds, to his surprise, that our government acts the Aunt Nancy with him, he becomes tenfold more the child of treason than before." New York World, March 14, 1862.

[68]Marcellus Mundy to Johnson, June 8, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 457.

union men can not live her[e] again while the arist[o]crats are allowed to keep negroe[s]."[69] In addition the Confederates were thought to hold at Mobile some seventy East Tennesseans, among them, in Johnson's view, some of the most respected and valuable citizens of the region. Asserting that "It is no punishment now to send secessionist[s] north," he decided to arrest seventy rebel sympathizers in retaliation and hold them for exchange or send them South.[70] Johnson's actions, however, bely his word on the proper direction that coercion should take.

Under constant entreaty to throw "the shadow of your protecting wing over our now troubled and bewildered fellow citizens," the governor seemingly determined to apply the oath class by class.[71] Having replaced the city council, suppressed the rebel newspapers, imprisoned some leading citizens, and placed "the bankers under the oath," the Tennessee Unionist turned toward the rebel clergy and summoned them to appear on Tuesday, June 17, in the office of his secretary of state, Edward H. East. Those present included the Reverend Messrs. Robert B. C. Howell, First Baptist Church; Reuben Ford, Cherry Street Baptist Church; Collins D. Elliot, First Presbyterian Church and president of the Nashville Female Academy. Included also in this uneasy assemblage of ministers were two Nashville

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[69]Thomas W. Spivey to Johnson, June 5, 1862, ibid., 444-45; see also letters to A.G.W. Thomas, June 9, 1862, Samuel P. Tipton, June 20, 1862, and James S. Negley, June 23, 1962; ibid., 460-61, 492, 499.

[70]Johnson to Lincoln, June 5, 1862, ibid., 445-46.

[71]Samuel P. Tipton to Johnson, June 20, 1862, Johnson Papers; Memorial, First Baptist Church Records.

physicians, A. H. Ford and B. W. Hall.[72] In response to their questions, Secretary East told those present that ministers of all denominations would have to take the oath. The secretary stated that "they were required by the Governor, to show their loyalty by taking an oath which he had prepared, a printed copy of which he placed in the hands of each gentleman present." All refused the oath at this stage, asking to see the governor.[73]

The next day found the same ministers joined by several others, among them the Reverend Messrs. Edmund W. Sehon, corresponding secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and William D. F. Sawrie, Methodist Andrews Church. The Reverend Messrs. Samuel D. Baldwin, McKendree Methodist Church, and William H. Wharton, minister of the Christian Church and chaplain of the penitentiary, had been commanded to appear but were not present in this first encounter with Johnson. However, all denominations were represented except the Catholic, Episcopal, and Cumberland Presbyterian.[74] The Catholic clergy, presumably loyal, were never disturbed.[75]

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[72] Ibid., New York Herald, April 24, 1865.

[73] Ibid., American Annual Cyclopaedia, II, 766; Wills, "Letters from Nashville," 77n.

[74] Nashville Union, June 19, 29, July 5, 1862; Memorial, First Baptist Church Records. At the time that Fort Donelson fell, Reverend Dr. Samuel D. Baldwin had planned a specially advertised sermon on the "Curse of Cowardice," using as his text the fifth chapter of Judges, especially "curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they come not to the help of the Lord--to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Nashville Union and American, February 16, 1862, quoted in New York World, March 7, 1862.

[75] London Times, July 16, 1862; Philadelphia Public Ledger, June 30, 1862.

Condemned by Johnson's organ, the Nashville Union, for "scattering the firebrand of treason amongst their flocks, instead of inculcating the precepts of the Prince of Peace," the ministers, according to one who was present, the Reverend Dr. Robert B. C. Howell, endured "a violent and vituperative" harangue of some length. During this tongue lashing, Johnson seemed "plainly under the influence of some strong excitement." Under these circumstances the "style, and spirit of the governor, resembled very much those of an angry overseer speaking to a herd of grossly offending slaves," Howell recalled.[76] The Nashville Union, however, reported a milder, more reserved chief executive, tactfully noting that Johnson "conversed for some time with much point and earnestness to his audience." Since the government was fighting for its very existence, he asserted, it must know its friends and foes. "It was unreasonable to suppose that it would suffer rebels and disloyal men to occupy a position which offered so many opportunities for mischief to corrupt and designing men, as the pulpit."[77]

The governor, himself, recollected that

> When they appeared before me, I stated to them in express and distinct terms that they were not arrested as preachers of Christ or as Ministers of the Gospel but that they were arrested for reasons of State[;] for being unfriendly to the Govt., aiding and exercising all their influence in favor of the Rebellion, that they were unfriendly and [I] therefore being an agent of the Govt. felt it my duty to arrest and remove them from this community, thereby

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[76]Nashville Union, June 19, 1862; Memorial, First Baptist Church Records.

[77]Nashville Union, June 19, 1862.

> destroying their influence. . . . These assumed Ministers of Christ have done more to poison & corrupt the female mind of this community than all others, in fact changing their entire character from that of women and ladies to fanatics and fiends.[78]

Insisting that "persons of undisputed character" had reported that "their preaching in the pulpit was treasonable itself as understood here," the governor showed particular irritation toward Collins D. Elliot, who had proudly advertised his school as waging "war--uncompromising and unrelenting--against all Yankee teachers, teachings, tricks, isms, and ideas."[79] A story was widely circulated that on one occasion Elliot had prayed "O Lord, grant that the soil of our valleys may be enriched by the blood, and the hills whitened with the bones of these invaders of our country."[80] When Elliot denied any disloyalty, Howell recalled that the military governor turned on him with "the fury of an enraged tiger," shouting that Elliot should be hung.[81] Samuel Glenn, a New York Herald reporter, recorded still another version of the confrontation, depicting the Tennessee patriot as chastening Elliot perhaps less heatedly. The governor still denounced the offending man of the cloth, telling him, as a minister and a school official, that

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[78]Johnson to Jeremiah T. Boyle, August 4, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 595-96.

[79]New York World, March 18, 1862.

[80]London Times, July 16, 1862; Philadelphia Press, July 7, 1862.

[81]Memorial, First Baptist Church Records.

> by your inflammatory remarks and conversation, and by your disloyal behavior in weaning the young under your charge from their allegiance to the government established by their fathers, you have won a name that will never be placed on the roll of patriots.

Johnson then proposed sending the Reverend Mr. Elliot to a northern state, causing a "sensation" in the crowded room.[82]

Upon being presented with the oath again, all declined to take it--at least that day. By common agreement, the Reverend Messrs. Sehon, Ford, and Sawrie asked for some time to put their affairs in order. Dr. Howell concurred in requesting a few days' grace period principally so that the others could arrange for their families (he being ready to decline the oath that day). The governor agreed and ordered all present except Elliot to return once more on Saturday, June 28, at high noon. He asked that Elliot see him in his office, alone, in a day or so. The others were to make their intentions known when they returned. They would take the oath or be expelled from the city.[83]

After the clergymen departed, Johnson returned his attention to Doctors Hall and Ford. He gave Dr. Hall a tongue lashing of such great "severity" that "some resentful emotions" were displayed by the hapless physician. Hall reportedly had advocated releasing the convicts from prison during the battle of Fort Donelson and filling their places with Union men. The physician hotly declared that the governor bore a grudge against him and was gratifying his desire for revenge with his verbal attacks and harassment. At this

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[82]New York Herald, April 24, 1865.

[83]Memorial, First Baptist Church Records.

remark Johnson snapped, "I consider you too contemptible to excite an emotion of resentment in anyone." The enraged physician leaped to his feet but was deterred from any further hostile action by the governor's "determined demeanor." Having stopped Hall in his tracks with his withering glare, the Tennessee loyalist turned on his heels and left the room.[84] Arrested following this encounter, Hall soon obtained a parole. However, he was later apprehended in Fleming County, Kentucky, charged with violating his parole, and imprisoned at Louisville.[85]

Between the time that the clergymen learned that they would have to take the oath and the day set aside for their final decision, the Reverend Samuel D. Baldwin preached a fiery pro-southern sermon on the "Curse of Cowardice." The minister, derisively designated "Armageddon BALDWIN" by the governor, swore that "he would go to the stake before he would pollute his soul with a foul and ungodly oath of allegiance." Unfortunately, he delivered his sermon before an audience containing a number of Federal officers. They allowed him to conclude his remarks before hustling him off to the pentitentiary.[86]

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[84]Louisville Journal, July 11, 1862; New York Herald, April 24, 1865.

[85]Louisville Journal, July 11, 1862; Mrs. B. W. Hall to Johnson, July 14, 1862; June 5, 1863, Johnson Papers. Mrs. Hall pleaded to no avail that his release was needed due to her impending operation "which may tirminate [sic] fatally."

[86]Clipping of Richmond Central Presbyterian, July 17, 1862, First Baptist Church Records; Nashville Union, June 29, 1862.

On Saturday, June 28, the remaining divines gathered in the office of the secretary of state. They apprehensively waited for two hours past the noon appointment (for some one from the governor's office). "At length [a] large[,] burley[,] red haired man[,] the perfect type of a well fed yankee, came into the room with a paper in his hand and sat down at the table." Without any introduction or explanation "but from his airs of consequence and his manner of proceeding," the clergymen presumed him to be the governor's private secretary. "He surveyed the ministers deliberately and with a long look of great severity," inquired about their readiness to take the oath. All refused and also declined his invitation to see the military governor. Immediately the official began to read their sentences which Howell later transcribed from notes taken at the time:

> The Reverend Doctors Howell, Ford, Sehon, and Sawrie, now under arrest, are ordered into the custody of the Provost Marshal, who will commit them to prison, there to remain until arrangements are completed for their transportation South, beyond the Federal lines, there to be left with the distinct understanding that if they recross, or come within said lines during the existing rebellion, they will be considered as spies, and dealt with accordingly.[87]

In what must have been a most colorful and provocative procession the ministers were immediately marched through the city by a corporal's guard "at the point of a bayonet" to the provost marshal's office located in the Nashville Female Academy. There, on Governor Johnson's order, they were given one last opportunity. "Should they desire to give evidence of their loyalty by taking the oath of allegiance and giving their individual bonds in the sum of $5,000 each for the faithful

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[87] Memorial, First Baptist Church Records.

observance thereof, they will be permitted to do so, and their release ordered accordingly."[88] The rebel divines refused.

The imprisoned ministers immediately became a cause célèbre. News of "the outrages" produced a tremendous "burst of public indignation," according to the Reverend Howell. Family members and friends swarmed into the prison, bearing "provisions, lounges, and such other conveniences" needed to make their imprisonment as comfortable as possible. Since their arrest came at the height of Johnson's offensive against the rebel elite, the ministers joined some of "the ablest, most estimable, and most honorable men in the country," including "the Judges, the Physicians, the Planters, the Merchants, and the Mechanics of the Land." Looking about the prison on the evening of their arrival, Howell observed that "the selected society in the state was then found assembled in the Penitentiary."[89]

That same Saturday, June 28, Johnson also summoned William H. Wharton, chaplain of the penitentiary, to his office for the same purpose as he called the other clergy. In these celebrated exchanges between the military governor and the rebel preachers, obviously both sides were relishing the opportunity to undermine the other's credibility and philosophical position. The wide publicity given the coercion of the nonjuring clergy was valuable propaganda for both sides. On the one hand the suppression of the recalcitrants could be used to display the governor's vigor in prosecuting traitors,

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[88] Johnson to Richard W. McClain, June 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 516.

[89] Memorial, First Baptist Church Records.

on the other, to demonstrate his loathsome cruelty to southern patriots. His rencounter with Chaplain Wharton revealed the obvious delight with which the plebeian sailed into his philosophical adversaries, teasing, taunting, and threatening, leading his foes down the primrose path of argumentation--and then springing the trap with a triumphant rhetorical flourish.

Before sending the chaplain off to join the other clergymen and the others in the prison where he had been ministering to the inmates, Johnson informed Wharton of the charges placed against him. "You are suspected of being hostile to the Government whose agent I am," the governor asserted. Wharton replied that his "very first temporal allegiance is due to Tennessee, and [I] am ready to go whichever way she goes." Moreover, the clergyman claimed a higher allegiance: "I am a citizen of Heaven!" Obviously delighted with Wharton's response for the opening it gave him, the governor handed him a copy of a document in which the militant had advocated enlisting and arming the penitentiary inmates for the Confederate Army.

> Is that your report sir, and your name? Do you call that the language of a "citizen of Heaven," to advise the turning loose of felons from the cells where justice has placed them, that they may join in the work of killing loyal men and of destroying the best government in the world? I don't believe the Almighty approves of such teaching as that.

Nonetheless, having dispensed an appropriate public rebuke to an offending rebel sympathizer, the military governor charitably permitted him a few days' parole due to Wharton's plea of bad health.[90] That

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[90]Nashville Union, June 29, 1862.

Johnson's generosity had strict limitations, nevertheless, was quickly demonstrated by his reaction to the commotion at the prison caused by the friends, relatives, and others clamoring for passes to visit the clergymen and bringing food, clothing, and other items for their comfort.

Upon learning of the demonstrations of public sympathy for the imprisoned clergymen, he dispatched an order to the provost marshal, prohibiting all visitors to the ministers except by the authority of the governor. "I would suggest that no encouragement should be given to that secession spirit and feeling which are manifested in the numerous offerings of delicacies, & c., by sympathizing rebel friends." The rebel clergymen should neither be "objects of especial attention" nor "lionized" by traitors.[91] Speaking at the capitol on July 4, he referred to his embargo on the "ham, sweet pickle and other delicacies," destined for the jailed men. More properly such treats should be given to the widows, orphans, and families of those deluded by the same preachers into joining the Confederate Army.[92]

Thereafter the informal and easy atmosphere at the prison changed. When the ministers first joined "the selected society in

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[91] Johnson to Richard W. McClain, June 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 517.

[92] Speech at Nashville, July 4, 1862, ibid., 537-38. A northern journalist described the moment when the ladies called upon Johnson to permit them to take some food to the Reverend Baldwin. "No ladies," remarked the governor, "they must be content with prison fare, and if you have a superabundance of the good things of this world, distribute it among the suffering mothers, widows, and orphans, with which the city abounds." Philadelphia Press, July 8, 1862.

the state," they had been allowed to wander about, visiting other inmates and even holding religious services. Johnson's proscription against unrestricted visitation and the receipt of fancy edibles resulted in the clergymen all being confined to one room, fifteen feet square with two armed guards stationed outside the door. Within a few weeks, however, the commanders "materially relaxed" on their own responsibility "the rigors" imposed. "They maintained that it was not their business to inflict punishment for Governor Johnson," recalled Dr. Howell.[93]

Perhaps to prevent the ministers from further being treated as martyrs should they be sent South, the military governor decided to imprison them in the North. Accordingly, on July 28, he began sending the "rabid secession preachers" on their long trek to northern prisons. "Those meek and holy bloodsuckers," Ford, Baldwin, Elliot, Sawrie, Wharton, and Sehon, were all dispatched first to the prison camp at Jeffersonville, Indiana, and them to Camp Chase, Ohio.[94] Stricken with a severe respiratory affliction, accompanied by chills, fever, and impaired vision, Howell escaped the rigors of Chase and remained in the Tennessee state prison. Eventually he secured the good offices of Joseph S. Fowler, the state comptroller in the provisional government, whom he had known previously. Fowler agreed to convey a letter to Johnson wherein Howell declined to take the oath but promised to

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[93]Memorial, First Baptist Church Records.

[94]Johnson to Oliver P. Morton, July 24, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 567; Nashville Union, August 1, 1862.

obey "conscientiously" the laws of the United States. Due to his illness, he was paroled on a day-by-day basis and upon sending Johnson a second communication on August 16, denying any disloyalty and promising to submit to "the powers that be," secured almost immediate release.[95]

Later that fall, having received assurances of good behavior from those ministers remaining in northern prisons, Johnson allowed them all to return home. Given the fact that during that summer and fall Nashville was under constant threat of attack and at times almost totally surrounded by hostile forces, the governor's release of the Nashville divines and other political prisoners during the fall of 1862 seems in strange contrast to his public posture on the need to punish the "intelligent and conscious" traitors, especially when Confederate forces often prowled so close that secessionist ladies reportedly kept their lights burning all night, expecting immediate deliverance.[96]

Indeed, Johnson carefully orchestrated an image of toughness and harshness toward "the deceivers of the people" while promising to spare "the penitent follower."[97] In his long conversation on July 31 with Major William H. Sidell, Fifteenth U. S. Infantry, the governor

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[95]Memorial, First Baptist Church Records; Howell to Johnson, [June] 28, August 16, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 513, 616-17n.

[96]Louisville Journal, October 25, 1862; Philadelphia Press, July 19, 1862.

[97]See Nashville Union, June 19, 1862.

ranged over a number of topics, including the defense of Nashville, the use of contrabands, and the appropriate policy toward the rebels. "The Governor says that recent observation has changed his ideas in regard to treating rebels with lenity," the major reported. The Tennessee executive supposedly admitted that he once advised leniency toward those in rebellion "but now believes that they must be made to feel the burden of their own deeds and to bear everything which the necessities of the situation require should be imposed on them."[98] Yet this statement is a non sequitur. The military governor never counseled leniency nor openly advocated a course that could be even loosely construed as "lenity." His policy positions seem carefully calculated to promote the opposite interpretation. With Unionists complaining almost daily of depredations and injustices at the hands of guerrillas and Confederate sympathizers, it would have been impossible for him to have taken a different public position than that expressed to Major Sidell.[99] His well-advertised crusades against the city officials, the rebel press, the "intelligent and conscious traitors," the Nashville divines, and others were well in motion at the time of the conversation with Sidell. Johnson had no reason to promote or suggest a change in his own policy. Moreover

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[98]William H. Sidell to James B. Fry, August 1, 1962, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, pp. 242-43.

[99]One Unionist wrote, "I may be pardoned for asking how long are we to suffer" and when would the county officials be made to "take the oath." See Hugh G. Thompson to Johnson, April 28, 1862; see also William B. Stokes and William B. Campbell to Johnson, May 8, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 347, 370.

he had already issued a proclamation early in May, 1862, calling for taking hostages and imposing confiscation in the event of guerrilla depredations. Although it apparently was not often invoked, the proclamation dictated that "in every instance in which a Union man is arrested and maltreated by the marauding bands aforesaid, five or more rebels from the most prominant in the neighborhood shall be arrested, imprisoned, and otherwise dealt with as the nature of the case may require." Furthermore, loyal citizens suffering loss of property would receive "full and ample remuneration" from the holdings of rebel sympathizers.[100] The governor directed the military officials to retaliate on the occasion of a rebel ambush by arresting twelve prominent Murfreesboro citizens, including a relative of Mrs. James K. Polk, widow of the president.[101] Thus Johnson had certainly demonstrated a public posture of rigor and coercion.

The governor provided an outstanding example of his hardline policy in his arrest and imprisonment of Turner S. Foster, the winner in the May 22 circuit court judge election. Foster, an avowed secessionist, defeated the Union candidate, Manson M. Brien. Galled by the secessionist's electoral triumph, Johnson sent him to a

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[100]Proclamation Concerning Guerrilla Raids, May 9, 1862, ibid., 374-75.

[101]Philadelphia Public Ledger, May 22, 1862; Johnson to John G. Parkhurst, May 11, [1862], Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 377. Less ostentatiously the governor ordered their release upon the posting of appropriate bonds. Johnson to Stanley Matthews, May 22, 1862, Johnson Papers.

northern prison where he remained until paroled in November, 1862.[102]

It, however, is important to note that in all or almost all of the instances where Johnson arrested and imprisoned a leading member of the Nashville elite, that individual was released from custody within a few weeks or a few months at the most. Moreover, many paroles and releases occurred after the governor's July 3 conversation with Sidell, indicating that his remarks were not a true guide for his actions. Johnson, obviously, felt more secure with his policy of symbolic coercion and ritual punishment than his remarks might seem to suggest. It is apparent that once an individual took the oath, gave his parole, or otherwise promised to obey the laws of the United States, the Tennessee Unionist was content to tolerate his freedom and even protect his right to a relative amount of security. William G. Harding and the Nashville ministers, especially the Reverend Howell, are notable examples.

In analyzing the Tennessee tailor-politician it should be remembered that there were always two Andrew Johnsons: one a spread-eagle, stump-speaking, stem-winding, spell-binding, gallery-rousing demagogue and polemicist; the other a crafty, resourceful, thoughtful, and skillful political operator, hungry enough to desire the very

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[102] Memorial, First Baptist Church Records; New York Herald, May 24, 1862; Louisville Journal, July 30, 1862; Nashville Union, July 27, 1862; Nashville Dispatch, November 22, 1862. A comtemporary observed that "With SEHORN to declaim, BALDWIN to dream, ELLIOT to pray, and JUDGE FOSTER to interpret the Constitution, the Penitentiary will become renowned for Law and Theology, eloquence and piety." Foster was sent North with the rebel preachers.

pinnacle of power and clever enough to reach it. It was the first Andrew Johnson who coerced, arrested, and imprisoned various members of the Nashville rebel elite; it was the second Andrew Johnson who obtained their releases, accepted their oaths, bonds, paroles, and even promises, while allowing them substantial freedom in a time of civil war.

The above illustrations suggest that the governor carefully followed a policy of flexibility and pragmatism.[103] The wily Tennessean often was a consummate Machiavellian, carefully polishing an image of toughness and harshness and honing a cutting edge of severity and radical rhetoric. General Grenville Dodge, of the Sixteenth Army Corps, once described a visit during Christmas, 1863. Noting that Johnson was very emphatic that "no rebel would receive much consideration from him," Dodge remembered leaving with the impression that Tennessee rebels had better depart the state. However, "we soon found that his words were much stronger than his acts." According to Dodge, "I hardly ever got my hands on a rebel stock of supplies that I did not find Johnson trying to pull them off."[104]

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[103]Despite the coercion of the Nashville and area elite, many other officials in the outlying districts under Federal control remained in office for several months despite being openly secessionist in sympathies. "[M]any of the sheriffs now in office are not reliable," one Federal officer reported, urging the governors to take action. Stephen A. Hurlburt to Johnson, November 12, 1862, Record Group 393, Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, National Archives. Hereafter such materials in the National Archives will be indicated by RG, etc.

[104]William E. Beard, Nashville: The Home of History Makers (Nashville, 1929), 62-63.

This is not to say that the governor was soft on rebels in general or not fully resolved to let given individuals pay the penalty for their politics. Consider the case of A.O.P. Nicholson of Columbia, an old Democratic ally and senatorial colleague of Johnson until his withdrawal effectively prevented official expulsion from the Senate in July, 1861.[105] Professing to be a disinterested spectator in secession and war, Nicholson, however, continued to affirm the right to secede and "the unalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish the government."[106] Like many other prominent rebel leaders singled out by Johnson and the military authorities for symbolic coercion, Nicholson refused to take the required oath and post the necessary bond.[107] Instead he chose the other alternative, banishment South beyond the Federal lines. Although there is no direct evidence that Johnson intervened on behalf of his old Maury County colleague, he remained interested in his situation. "Did he express any desire to see me?" the governor inquired, perhaps disbelieving that a former senator and one-time political bedfellow would prefer the companionship of traitors to the Union.[108] The post

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[105] McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 554.

[106] A.O.P. Nicholson to Johnson, December 28, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[107] Nashville Union, August 12, 1862. Nicholson boldly told the military authorities that "he had been a sympathizer with the South, and was still a sympathizer with the Rebellion; that he had made up his mind to take the consequences before he would take the oath." New York Tribune, August 8, 1862.

[108] Johnson to James S. Negley, August 8, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 601.

commander at Columbia replied on July 29, "Nicholson did not speak of you but seemed under the influence of his wife who is like many other women here intense bitter & unbearable."[109] Allegedly, when Mrs. Nicholson was refused permission to take her husband some food and a pillow by Negley, who declared that the rebel sympathizer should be hung, the senator's lady became furious:

> She immediately bestowed upon the General the vilest of abuse, and exhausted the vocabulary of opprobrious epithets in her rage, telling him that her husband was willing to take the oath with her consent, but that he should rot in jail first.[110]

Nicholson remained outside the Federal lines until late 1864 when he returned to Columbia, without remorse but hopeful that the governor would give him a non-combatant's parole. "I am encouraged to make this application to you by the kind terms with which you received my wife when she called on you at Nashville." Frankly confessing that "I entertain the same views now and I deem it my duty to state them to you," Johnson's old friend staunchly defended his earlier support for the right of secession. However, he asked only to be allowed to live peaceably and "I do not ask to be exempted from any of the duties, or obligations which legitimately attach to a non-combatant citizen of a subject country." In return for the parole, Nicholson wanted the right "to remain unmolested at home"

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[109] Nashville Union, August 12, 1862; James S. Negley to Johnson, August 10, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 605.

[110] New York Tribune, August 8, 1862.

without Johnson requiring him "to enter into bonds or oaths which are revolting to my feelings, and which of themselves imply a distrust of my integrity."[111] Despite his hopes for Johnson's aid, however, Nicholson was soon arrested again and this time imprisoned. Nonetheless, the military governor remained concerned with his plight and, later, upon his "kind interference," Nicholson obtained his release. Months thereafter, his family "stripped of every necessary of life" and rendered dependent on his precarious legal work for daily subsistence, the former rebel tendered his "sincere thanks for your kindness in extending to me a special Pardon" to President Andrew Johnson, suddenly placed in the White House by the assassin's bullet.[112]

The war continued, although the threat to Nashville subsided with the Federal operations in East Tennessee in the autumn of 1863. Yet, the governor's rhetoric perhaps even increased in intensity. Bombast, threats, recriminations, and dire maledictions often appeared in the press and in his speeches. Nevertheless, the politician's willingness to intercede for the occasional citizen, "well-known and highly esteemed--universally regarded as a man of honor" despite having "identified himself with the majority which then unfortunately ruled this State" still remained. In one instance the governor sought protection for William L. Murfree, whose Murfreesboro farm lay adjacent to a military post at that place. Explaining that Murfree, who had

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[111]Nicholson to Johnson, December 18, 1862, Johnson Papers.

[112]Nicholson to Johnson, December 1, 1865, ibid.

already suffered great losses to his property in Mississippi, had originally opposed secession, but subsequently acquiesced in the rebellion "tho' in no particularly offensive or prominent way," Johnson explained that the Nashvillian had already taken the oath of allegiance. "I believe that he intends faithfully [to] keep it," he insisted, "not merely as a means of protection to himself and his property--but from a sense of duty to his country as a loyal citizen, who accepts the results of the war and is trying to reconcile his business to the new status of affairs."[113] Such a citizen would represent the ideal candidate for Johnson's clemency although certainly the willingness to take the oath or give a parole provided sufficient justification in the wide variety of cases already documented. Clearly, the governor desired the symbolic vindication of the Union.

One must constantly keep Johnson's treatment of the rebel elite in perspective. His use of the oath and other coercive measures also reflected the shattering hysteria and paranoid practices then prevalent in other loyal and border sections of the country. The oath itself was an outgrowth of the tensions and alarms that followed in the baggage train of secession and war. Suddenly realizing that many persons high in the Federal government including certain senators, congressmen, cabinet officials, military officers, and even two presidential candidates bore the taint of disloyalty, many Americans began demanding a test of loyalty.[114] Radicals especially cried for

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[113]Johnson to George H. Thomas, November 6, 1863, ibid.

[114]Harold M. Hyman, Era of the Oath: Northern Loyalty Tests During the Civil War and Reconstruction (Philadelphia, 1954), xii-xiii.

action against the party of betrayal and treason. "Crowds of them [at this period, when the storm of civil war was about bursting on the country,] thronged the anterooms of the President and Secretaries, clamorous for the removal of all Democrats, indiscriminately from office."[115] Out of this maelstrom of fear and uncertainty emerged the loyalty oath, born in a suggestion made by Attorney-General Edward Bates, in April, 1861, that all Federal employees take an oath of allegiance. The cabinet approved the proposition and thereafter Federal employees were required to signify their loyalty by swearing fealty to the Constitution. By January, 1862, dismissals for disloyalty or suspected disloyalty had become so commonplace that jobseekers appealed for positions on the basis of their loyalty and the knowledge of widespread vacancies.[116] Thus Governor Johnson's use of the oath conformed to a contemporary pattern.

Other features of his coercion of the rebel elite were seemingly extrapolated from practices then current. For example, the governor's famous December edict assessing nearly ninety prominent rebels a total of sixty thousand dollars for poor relief essentially duplicated General Orders No. 24 issued by General Halleck a year earlier on December 12, 1861, in St. Louis for the benefit of "suffering families driven back by rebels from Southwestern Missouri."[117] Halleck had

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[115]Howard K. Beale, ed., Diary of Gideon Welles: Secretary of the Navy Under Lincoln and Johnson (3 vols., New York, 1960), I, 10. There are brackets in the original entry.

[116]Hyman, Era of the Oath, 1-9, 163n, 165n.

[117]Proclamation on Relief of the Poor, December 13, 1862, Nashville Dispatch, December 14, 1862; OR, Ser. 1, VIII, 431-32.

warned anyone refusing or resisting would be arrested and tried by a military commission. The Tennessee governor threatened no such dire consequences in his proclamations but the assessments, ranging in amounts of $250 for relatively minor members of the elite to $2,500 levied on the wealthy John Overton, surely were stiff jolts in a disordered economy.[118] Johnson's action, ostensibly designed to aid the "many helpless widows, wives and children" of Confederate soldiers seems genuinely charitable in its intention. Contemporaries noted the "great suffering" of the poor and asserted that "it is difficult even for those in good circumstances to obtain the ordinary comforts of life."[119] Due to the various Confederate seiges, disrupted rail traffic, and the general dislocation of the economy, supplies were so scarce that a cord of wood cost forty dollars, sugar sold for thirty-five cents a pound, and a pound of cheese retailed at an inflated rate of forty cents! An exhausted gas supply plunged the already dangerous night-time streets into an even more foreboding darkness and also raised the price of a pound of candles from thirty to forty-five cents in the space of a single day.[120] Unless the Confederate poor (numbering at least 900 families by one account) were not to become wards of the Federal army, the assessment seemed a logical if Draconian measure. "It is enough to make one's heart bleed to witness

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[118] Ibid. Other unhappy "contributors" were William G. Harding, $1,000; Neill S. Brown, $500; and Washington Barrow, $500.

[119] Proclamation, December 13, 1862, Nashville Dispatch, December 14, 1862; Louisville Journal, January 21, 1863.

[120] Ibid., January 21, 26, 1863.

the sorrow and distress of the poor wifes and mothers who daily crowd the Executive Office for relief," one pro-administration scribe insisted.[121]

Beyond charity, however, the governor certainly recognized the inherent propaganda value of his levy upon the rebel elite. Such action surely would embolden the Union spirits in a time of low morale and flagging hopes. Moreover, under the terms of the Confiscation Act, July 17, 1862, Congress approved a bill empowering the president to order the seizure of all property, excluding slaves, for several categories of rebels, and made all persons aiding the rebellion liable for the loss of their property. Obviously, this law depended on presidential cooperation.[122] Nevertheless, Tennessee radicals eyed the great plantations with eager intentions. "Confiscation is a blister which will peal [sic] off the dead skin of treason," declared one commentator, urging the seizure and division of "some of these fine estates, containing many thousands of acres of the choicest lands, in the vicinity of this city, now belonging to notorious

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[121]Nashville Union, December 14, 1862. During the fall of 1862, provisions in the countryside in Middle Tennessee were so scarce that daily wagon trains, often 500 wagons at a time, left Kentucky to supply the Federal forces. U.S. and C.S.A. troops, irregulars, and civilians alike foraged the ravaged countryside. Whether loyal or rebel, "no cornfield, chicken-roost, or smokehouse was secure from being 'pressed.'" Between the two armies the entire region around Nashville was stripped. Louisville Journal, November 11, 1862.

[122]Edward McPherson, The Political History of the United States During the Great Rebellion (Washington, 1865), 196; Nevins, War for the Union, II, 145-46. The bill was less important for its provisions concerning confiscation than its attack on slavery, freeing the slaves of those persons judged guilty of treason or rebellion or giving aid and comfort to the Confederacy.

rebels."[123] In the press and in public encounters with the rebel elite the governor maintained a harsh and severe profile. "Wealth and position shall not shield a traitor from the avenging justice of the people," he thundered.[124] Had Johnson, however, actually desired the confiscation of the property of the rebel elite, his standing with Lincoln was surely high enough that a dialogue on the subject would have been merited. Perhaps the president even may have acquiesced. Obviously, such a discussion was never seriously initiated and Johnson never pursued a course of outright confiscation. Instead the military governor followed a middle path of coercion, sufficiently bold enough to prevent serious criticism from the radical ranks and of such rigor that certain rebels felt the weight of his authority.[125]

The Federal occupation of Middle Tennessee had caused many persons of southern sympathies to leave the area. Others passed back and forth between the lines, either openly or secretly, living in a kind of shadow world, neither Federal nor Confederate. Aware that a number of secessionists, exiled or refugeeing in the South, were collecting income from renting their homes and other property and that this money was being forwarded to them by relations, friends, and hired agents, Johnson moved to curb the practice.

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[123] Nashville Union, December 21, 1862.

[124] Ibid., August 19, 1863.

[125] During Christmas, 1863, following the proclamation assessing the rebel elite, Generals Grant, Dodge, and others paid a social call on the governor. Johnson spoke with great zeal concerning his desire to prevent any rebel from escaping punishment, and at one point punctuated his remarks with such a vigorous blow of his hand to the top of a piano that all in the room jumped in surprise. Beard, Nashville, 62-63.

Citing relevant portions of the Confiscation Act, applicable to those persons holding official positions under "the so-called Confederate States of America" and possessing property in the loyal states, the governor sought to sequester the rents and proceeds on the holdings of certain rebels and rebel sympathizers. On February 20, 1863, Johnson issued a proclamation directing that all those persons paying rents or acting as agents for the collection of rent on property owned by secessionists should halt further payment until an appropriate person could be appointed to collect the proceeds for the Federal government.[126] This stringent action was potentially productive of great mischief, malfeasance, and maleficience and surely led to repudiation and default on otherwise legitimate debts. Since by its very intention renters and tenants were ordered not to pay their rebel landlords but to hold the money pending the future collection by a still-to-be designated official, many opportunities for fraud were possible. On July 14, a woeful Mrs. B. W. Hall wrote the governor, declaring that she was beset with creditors on one hand and loss of income on the other by virtue of his sequestration. Wife of the physician arrested earlier and later imprisoned, Mrs. Hall complained that without release from the provisions of the proclamation "you had just as well put me in the Penitentiary & be done with it."[127]

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[126] McPherson, Political History, 196; Proclamation, February 20, 1863, Frank Moore, ed., The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events (11 vols. and supp., New York, 1861-68), VI, 422.

[127] Mrs. B. W. Hall to Johnson, July 14, 1863, Johnson Papers.

Although the governor apparently delayed any overt intercession for nearly six months, he almost certainly gave Mrs. Hall reason to believe that he was willing to help her. On December 28, she told him, "I slept sweetly last night in the hope and belief that you would not permit me to be thrown into the streets." Pleading for a suspension of his order until March, 1864, she promised to leave the city and go North. "A whole heart full of gratitude," she affirmed, "will ever be yours."[128] Supporting herself and several members of her immediate family by taking in boarders, Mrs. Hall was convinced that the governor never intended that her property should be sequestered. "I am well assured you never included me in that Proclamation," she explained. She listed several individuals owing money to her husband and herself and observed that "no honest man" would have taken advantage of the proclamation to evade these just debts.[129]

The tenor of these communications suggests a special understanding or relationship between Johnson and Mrs. Hall although the governor displayed no eagerness to relieve her distress. Implicit is a feeling that the Tennessee loyalist may have indicated that he would consider halting the enforcement of the sequestration process to allow her to collect money for her support. That implication appears to be reinforced by another letter apparently written

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[128]Mrs. Hall to Johnson, December 28, 1863, ibid.

[129]Mrs. Hall to Johnson, June 5, 1863, ibid.

between January and July, 1864, in which Mrs. Hall very hospitably invited the governor and several members of his staff "to spend an hour or two--in a social capacity" with her. She mentioned a previous social engagement with other federal officials and regretted the failure of a messenger to deliver an intended invitation to the governor. Such cordiality leads one to the conclusion that Johnson had already halted the sequestration of her rental income, since he could hardly be expected to pay a social call on an enemy of the state.[130] Given his history of charitable gestures toward certain rebels, such an eventuality would be entirely logical.

Johnson's apparent effort to aid Mrs. Hall also suggests a well authenticated habit of receiving the pleas of rebel ladies and often responding favorably to their entreaties. Such a tendency can be observed in his past efforts to aid Mrs. Harding and assisting her to visit her husband at Fort Mackinac. This well developed trait of Johnson's tenure as military governor would become even more prevalent in the presidential years.

Despite her public posture as a loyal subject of the Confederacy, Mrs. Sarah C. Polk sought and apparently received Johnson's intervention on several occasions. In one instance the former First Lady asked the governor to release one of her relatives, James M. Avent, taken hostage in reprisal for a rebel ambush in Murfreesboro. Whether her

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[130]Mrs. Hall to Johnson, [January, 1864] ibid. Internal evidence in the letter inviting Johnson and friends "on Wednesday the 20st inst" suggests that it was dated either January, April, or July, the only months in which the 20th fell on Wednesday in 1864.

plea that "his wife & children, who are in the midst of an encampment, which reaches to his door," influenced him or not, the Tennessee executive soon thereafter ordered Avent and the other Murfreesboro hostages released upon parole and bond.[131] Later, when property owned by Avent and another person within her circle was seized and offered for sale by Federal authorities, Johnson again intervened on Mrs. Polk's behalf and obtained a postponement, giving the owners an opportunity to appeal the government's action.[132]

This solicitous attitude toward rebels of the gentler sex was the subject of a perceptive observation by a reporter for a northern newspaper in the spring of 1864. Marveling that the military governor endured the insults of the secessionists with the same serene indifference as he did the certain knowledge of his impending nomination as vice president, the journalist noted that the rebels labored tirelessly to injure the Tennessee Unionist, when, in reality, some might be in his debt.

> There is not a female rebel here, but makes use of language, relative to the Governor, in which no respectable Northern lady would indulge; yet, after listening to their slander, until they are exhausted, if they are asked if they ever

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[131]Sarah C. Polk to Johnson, May 17, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 401; Johnson to John G. Parkhurst, May 12, 1862; Johnson to Stanley Matthews, May 22, 1862, Johnson Papers. Mrs. Polk's southern sympathies appeared early in the secession crisis. Following the fall of Fort Sumter she served as the president of a Soldier's Friend Society. Horn, "Nashville During the Civil War," 5.

[132]See Johnson to William P. Mellen, April 17, 1864; Mary C. Avent to Johnson, October 24, 1864; [Sarah C. Polk] to Johnson, Johnson Papers; William P. Mellen to Johnson, April 7, 1864, RG 366, Records of Civil War Special Agencies of the Treasury Department.

> had any business to transact with the Governor, they will reply, Yes; and then, if pressed, they will say that they applied to him for some favor, for themselves or friends; and if still further questioned, they will say that in all their intercourse with him, they never found him anything else than a courteous and obliging gentleman.[133]

Thus the pattern for the presidential years was set in the cockpit of Tennessee. Even Johnson's famous threats against the rebel aristocracy and individuals like Jefferson Davis (whom he later threatened to hang) must be interpreted in the same light.

During the early weeks of 1864 when he was trying to midwife a bastardized state government into existence, he resorted to ominous and grimly menacing language, vilifying members of the former secesh elite and taunting them with threats of summary retribution, confiscation, and impoverishment. "For, not to be malicious or malignant, I am free to say, that many who were driven into this rebellion, I believe are repentant, but I say of the leaders, the instigators, the conscious intelligent traitors, they ought to be hung." Declaring that "treason must be made odious" and traitors punished, he asserted that the time would come "when the Union men who have been oppressed, and the loyal heirs of those who have perished on the battle field, or starved in the mountains, will . . . be remunerated out of the property of those who betrayed and tried to destroy their country." In the final analysis, he feared that "when traitors become numerous enough, then treason becomes respectable."[134]

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[133]Chicago Tribune, June 14, 1864.

[134]Speech on Restoration of State Government, January 21, 1864, Johnson Papers.

With less than six months remaining in his tenure as military governor and in the midst of the presidential campaign of 1864, the plebeian launched one of his most notorious verbal assaults on the Tennessee "scrub aristocracy." Speaking before a crowd of contrabands, the governor denounced the role of the wealthy secessionists in the war and seemingly embraced the cause of the levelers:

> It is wrong that Mack Cockrill and W. G. Harding, by means of forced and unpaid labor, should have monopolized so large a share of the lands and wealth of Tennessee; and I say if their immense plantations were divided up and parcelled out amongst a number of free, industrious, and honest farmers, it would give more good citizens to the Commonwealth, increase the wage of our mechanics, enrich the markets of our city, enliven all the arteries of trade, improve society, and conduce to the greatness and glory of the State.

Warming to the subject and incited by the enthusiasm of his audience, Johnson attacked the prominent rebels, accusing them of using their wealth to fuel the rebellion, dwelling in ease and safety while their sons "prowl and rob and murder around our city," and hypocritically opposing black equality but fathering mulatto children "bearing an unmistakable resemblance to their aristocratic owners!"[135] Having thus reprised the stale staple of the abolitionist lecture circuit, Johnson seemed the embodiment of the zealous avenger, fulminating against a decadent social system and traitorous enemies.

To those unfamiliar with his rhetorical habits such remarks seemed to foretell a radical transformation in the Tennessean's outlook

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[135]Speech to Colored Men of Nashville, October 24, 1864, Moore, Speeches of Andrew Johnson, xxxix.

toward the rebel elite. Nevertheless, the spread-eagle stump speaker had used equally fearsome threats in the early stages of the conflict. "Civil war is more to be deprecated than any other kind of warfare," he exclaimed in July, 1861, "and those who have been the immediate cause should be treated with unusual vigor & severity." Although he desired peace and prayed for it, the circumstances were not promising.

> I believe the time has come when the plethora has become too great in the body politic. The dimensions of the tumor have become so great, its properties so inflammable, that nothing will now do but the effectual application of the Surgeon's knife. (Enthusiastic applause.) And even addressing it to this extreme, if it become necessary to amputate a limb, or to take out a tumor with the Surgeon's knife, I say let the work be thoroughly done.[136]

Yet, when it came time to operate, the surgeon was always reluctant to grasp the instrument or wield the blade. Although his correspondence and speeches might deal in dire terms and awesome threats, not a solitary member of the rebel elite bowed his head for the executioner's hood or tumbled through the terminal trap. Indeed the most unswerving rebel could avoid problems and complications by seeking refuge in the non-combatant's parole or affixing a perjured signature to the oath of allegiance. Many obviously did. Throughout the war the governor was content with his exercise of symbolic coercion despite bombastic threats to act otherwise. In fact, he could cloak a legitimate act of clemency in a rhetorical mantle of bitterness and stridency. Upon asking Lincoln in the summer of 1864 to pardon a

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[136]Speech to Missourians in the District of Columbia, July 12, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 571.

fifteen-year-old soldier to be hung for murder, he urged a commuted life sentence but seemed to suggest harsher punishment for others of greater consequence.

> I am free to say that the moral influence would be much greater if we could hang some of the large fish. It would have a much better influence on the country. There is no trouble in convicting and hanging the little minnows which makes and leaves no impression upon the public mind.[137]

There are enough public and unpublicized examples of leniency in the governor's coercion of the rebels, however, to justify the contention that Johnson's seemingly inexplicable resort to wholesale pardons and other acts of clemency in the presidential years was no aberration but surely reflected an approach to the rebel power structure that had its roots in the war period. "I once heard you say that your pardoning power was the highest attribute of your nature," a Camp Chase prisoner recalled in March, 1862, in asking to be allowed to take the oath of allegiance and to return home.[138] Unfortunately, for his later political career that trait was never well understood, fully articulated, or easily explained. Although Johnson could be satisfied with symbolic coercion along with the appropriate ritual assurances from those members of the rebel elite whom he chose to aid, he would later discover (to his and the nation's misfortune) that his previous tendency to shield those reasonable, but surely unpopular and politically dangerous actions behind a camouflage of

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[137] Johnson to Lincoln, August 19, 1864, Stanton Papers.

[138] James A. Moore to Johnson, March 10, 1862, RG 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War.

violent, extreme, and misleading rhetoric had a pernicious character all its own. The habit when projected into the presidency would be the source of great confusion, misunderstanding, and political mischief. He was to discover that the political skills and survival instincts that had seemed suitable for the Tennessee heartland were not sufficient for the ever changing mixture of partisanship and embittered idealism that he must face. The unfortunate anomaly between rhetoric, deed, and perception would be a national tragedy.

Historians and contemporaries alike have been puzzled by the seemingly inexplicable contrast between the images of a vindictive military governor, harshly threatening improverishment (and worse) and a suddenly benevolent, forgiving president, graciously dispensing pardons by the hundreds over the protests of enraged radicals. Historian Eric L. McKitrick observed that this "softened attitude is attributed variously to the counsels of Secretary Seward, the intrigues of the Blairs, and the blandishments of Southern ladies seeking pardons for their husbands." Although the president may have been momentarily vulnerable to the Washington power brokers or the appeals of the attractive rebel matrons, McKitrick concluded that Johnson's general views on reconstruction had been fixed early in the war. In the same manner, the Tennessean's treatment of the rebels during the period 1862-1865 anticipated his policy toward that group in the presidential years.[139]

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[139]McKitrick, Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction, 92.

CHAPTER III

THE GOVERNOR AND JOHNNY REB: THE POLITICS OF CLEMENCY

Close observers of Andrew Johnson's tenure as military governor should not have been surprised at the laissez-faire attitude later adopted by the new resident in the White House. His leitmotif on the necessity to make treason infamous might not have convinced the radicals that "the ascension of Johnson to the Presidency would prove a godsend to the country" had they been more perceptive. Rather than crying to the newly sworn president on the day following Lincoln's assassination that "we have faith in you" and "there will be no trouble now in running the government!" Ohio's Benjamin Wade might have launched his campaign for Johnson's impeachment months earlier.[1] That the Tennessean managed to shield his more charitable efforts toward the secesh from an attentive public and interested partisans like Wade was eloquent testimony to his considerable political skills and his adroit use of propaganda. While military governor, he cultivated a posture of harshness that transcended the realities of Tennessee. The experience in attempting to restore his own state would provide him a reputation larger than life. Not until years later would the half-truths, misconceptions, and presumptions about the rigors under the tailor-governor of Tennessee start to fade and the anomaly between

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[1] Quoted in Nevins, War for the Union, IV, 342; George W. Julian, Political Recollections, 1840-1872 (Miami, 1969 [1884]), 257.

rhetoric and reality begin to emerge. That contrast is clearly apparent in his efforts to swell the ranks of the loyalists by obtaining the release of rebel soldiers captured with the fall of the river forts in early 1862.

On March 22, 1862, the tailor-politician addressed the people of Nashville and the surrounding countryside, who came crowding into the state house of representatives and overflowed into the street, anxious to learn about their future prospects. On the stand with him as he spoke of his mission to Tennessee were his political allies in travail, Congressman Horace Maynard, his Washington confidant; William H. Polk, brother of the late Tennessee President and a colorful link to the past; John Hugh Smith, mayor-in-waiting; and two Nashville postmasters, "brave John Lellyett" and Adrian Van Sinderen Lindsley. Scattered about the attentive and responsive audience appeared a number of prominent secessionists, among them Washington Barrow, former member of the state legislature and, most notably, one of the three Tennessee commissioners who negotiated the military league between the state and the Confederacy. About forty or fifty ladies graced the front seats, most of them veiled and dressed in black, wreathing the military governor in "a mournful array of sables." One observer noted the absence of city officials. The audience was generally farmers and area residents, "native and to the manor born." Surprisingly, for a city so recently a military prize, only "a sprinkling" of blue-capped soldiers attended. Most of the Federal force, as Johnson stood before his fellow Tennesseans, was stalking the elusive Confederate army further south of Nashville. In the hall of the house of

representatives the "blue overcoats of the soldiers were surrounded and almost hid by the brown jeans of the farmer."[2]

In his fiery review of the disruption of the Union, Johnson warmed to his subject, moving his audience to respond, some applauding, cheering, and laughing; others, like the secessionists, sullen and "ill at ease," shaking their heads in negation at the Tennessee loyalist's remarks. He damned the secession leaders, calling the roll of treason and deceit: the ungrateful Jefferson Davis, "chief of an ungodly rebellion"; Breckinridge, the deceiver; Isham G. Harris, a preposterous dictator; and Judah P. Benjamin, the "sneaking thief and perjurer." He blamed secession for those slain and dying on the battlefield. "Let us have no more of this," he pleaded, "call back your sons and let the guilty leaders be punished for their treason."[3]

Observing that many persons had expressed concern for the Confederate soldiers taken to northern prisons from Forts Henry and Donelson, Johnson reflected on the prisoner issue, one that would occupy his time over the next several months. "Let me say to a large portion of those who have been engaged in this bloody and disgraceful business, through the deception of others, that I welcome them back to loyalty," the former tailor proclaimed. While visiting the prisons in the North before he returned to Tennessee as military governor, "I received many entreaties to intercede for the unfortunate inmates, who

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[2]Cincinnati Commercial, March 28, 1862; Louisville Journal, March 29, 1862; Lindsley, Diary, 85; McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 30; McGavock, Pen and Sword, 642n; Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 62n-63n.

[3]Philadelphia Inquirer, April 1, 1862; Louisville Journal, March 29, 1862; New York Times, April 1, 1862.

had been torn from the endearing scenes of home, and the embraces of loving families." Yet, he would not, at the present, intercede for anyone. "Direct your efforts to the prisons of Alabama, where men, innocent of any crime but devotion to the Union, are incarcerated." They were not prisoners of war where they could breathe the free air, "but dwelt in a loathsome jail in Montgomery." To those pleading for intercession Johnson declared, "begin the work first." The governor, who feared for the safety of his own family at Greeneville and elsewhere, seemed in no mood for leniency.[4] Despite his publicly stated position, however, he was working privately that very day to secure the release of the Tennessee rebels in the prisons at Camp Douglas, Illinois; Camp Morton, Indiana; Fort Warren, Massachusetts; Camp Chase, Ohio; and several other facilities in the northern states. Lincoln's man in the South had too long been a student of southern politics not to recognize the political potential that the rebel prisoners offered to himself and to the Union. Behind a public position of threats, bombast, and vituperation, the military governor quietly pursued the goal of securing the release of the Tennessee rebel prisoners. As contemporaries would learn all too sorrowfully, the plebeian's habit of hiding his real intentions behind a menacing manner and rabble-rousing rhetoric would be carried forward into the presidency.

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[4]Cincinnati Enquirer, March 28, 1862; Louisville Journal, March 29, 1862; New York Times, April 1, 1862. Judah P. Benjamin, the Confederate secretary of war, had ordered Johnson's son-in-law, David T. Patterson, arrested and the governor believed that he had been imprisoned in Alabama at this time.

On their way to their home state, Johnson; his son Robert, a recent escapee from their home in Greeneville; Congressman Horace Maynard; and Emerson Etheridge, then clerk of the House of Representatives, reached Ohio by train just as the Tennessee rebels were arriving at the various northern prisons.[5] Curious residents of Columbus crowded the streets to watch the first contingent of 750 Donelson prisoners march the few miles from the depot to the barracks at Camp Chase. Ohio Governor David Tod halted his labors of state to observe the procession.[6] Thereafter Tod escorted Maynard to the camp on March 5, where they ate "a soldier's dinner" and toured the grounds.[7]

Located just outside the state capital, Chase was constructed on a low, marshy plain of 300 acres, where the mud ranged from perhaps six inches to an epic depth of two feet. With its flimsy hovels and crowded conditions, the prison was an ill-chosen and "God-forsaken" spot for human habitation. No Tennessee farmer, Colonel Randal W. McGavock complained, would lodge his hogs or cattle in such a place.

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[5]Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 11, 1862; Indianapolis Journal, February 26, 1862. Robert had walked by night 153 miles through the Confederate lines from Greeneville to reach the Federal troops near Cumberland Gap, arriving at the camp of the 49th Indiana Regiment on Thursday, February 13, 1862.

[6]Cincinnati Enquirer, March 2, 1862. Anxious to get a good view of the prisoners, Tod stepped too close to suit a blue coated guard and was ordered back. Upon learning the identity of the chief executive, the sergeant saluted smartly and reported his order, "Governor, you must step back in the line." Unperturbed, Tod obeyed, remarking pleasantly, "That soldier deserves promotion."

[7]Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 11, 1862.

"The smell from the pit is intolerable, and I predict that if these men are kept here until warm weather, they will die like sheep with the rots."[8] Nevertheless, most would be lucky. Due to Andrew Johnson's efforts, all would have an opportunity to be released, either by swearing an oath and being paroled--or waiting to be exchanged for a Union soldier in a southern prison. Even before the Johnson party reached Nashville, Maynard's tour of the prison facility brought freedom to one inmate, though with little apparent comfort to the Union cause.

During his visit, Maynard located a young East Tennessean named Easterly and obtained his release from the prison by securing the direct cooperation of the war department.[9] Maynard also encountered an old political opponent, Colonel James E. Bailey, enjoying the relative freedom of a controversial parole. A Clarksville lawyer in civilian life, Bailey served as a member of the rebel Tennessee military and financial board and as acting brigadier-general at Donelson before

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[8]Cincinnati Enquirer, March 2, 1862; McGavock, Pen and Sword, 598-99. A Donelson prisoner, Randal McGavock spent an unpleasant stay at the Ohio facility before being sent to Fort Warren, Massachusetts. Quartered in a filthy, vermin-infested shanty, the Confederate officer complained bitterly after a hard night spent on a plank. "The more I see of this dirty and loathsome prison, the more outraged I feel."

[9]This was probably Second Lieutenant J. W. Easterly, 26th Tenn., C.S.A., held briefly at Camp Morton before being transferred. Indianapolis Journal, February 25, 1862; Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 11, 1862. Maynard's son, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Maynard, Sixth Tenn., objected strenuously to Easterly's release. "He was and is a rebel at heart." Asserting this his action had been harmful to the Union cause, the son urged his father, "For God's sake, don't release any more rebels." Edward Maynard to Horace Maynard, March 24, 1862, Horace Maynard Papers, University of Tennessee Library.

surrendering with his troops. Inadvertently, he and certain other Confederate officers were assigned to the city of Columbus rather than Camp Chase.[10] The bureaucratic mistake would embarrass Governor Tod and certainly delay Johnson's efforts to secure the release of the Tennessee prisoners. For under the precise interpretation of the parole, Bailey would be subject to severe penalties for violating the letter of the order. So he gleefully eschewed the barren and foreboding accommodations at the prison camp in favor of more comfortable quarters at Columbus' American Hotel, where he met Maynard.[11] Meanwhile, unaware that this parole problem and other unforeseen forces were gathering strength to stall his plans, Governor Johnson continued to press forward.

Immediately upon assuming office, he began receiving from the Tennessee rebels in Camp Chase and elsewhere pleas to the effect that their imprisonment was a mistake, that they were either noncombatants or Unionists forced into rebel service, or that they had been duped into joining the Confederate Army. James L. Bottles, a Greene Countian at Chase, asked the Tennessee executive's intercession, citing the plight of his wife, child, and aged father, "who always worshiped" the governor.[12] Another unfortunate, held at the same

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[10] OR, Ser. 2, III, 326; Ser. 1, LII, 141-42.

[11] Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 11, 1862; McGavock, Pen and Sword, 587n. Bailey, ironically, would fill the vacant Senate seat created by Johnson's death in 1875.

[12] Despite Bottles' plea, he later rejoined his old 26th Infantry Regiment as lieutenant colonel when it was reorganized in Knoxville, after his parole and exchange in September, 1862. His regiment fought

place, claimed to be a civilian merely visiting a sick relative at Donelson when the fort came under seige. The supplicant, a Giles County resident, declared modestly that "if you will get my release you will confer a favour on humanity ever to be remembered."[13] Another prisoner, Robert G. Bails, forced to enlist in the 48th Tenn. Infantry, C.S.A., to prevent confiscation of his property, pleaded for his freedom. Addressing Johnson familiarly as "My Old Friend," Bails insisted that "19/20 of us are really true & loyal men to the Government of our Ancestors."[14] Thus the governor's mail confirmed what he must have known from his own contacts or Maynard's visits with those held in the northern prisons--that the war had been brought home to the Tennesseans. Now tired of the conflict, they wanted to go home. Despite his public pronouncements concerning his unwillingness to intercede for the Tennessee captives, Johnson most certainly was extremely interested in securing their release--but upon his own terms. He clearly recognized the contribution that the prisoners' freedom could make to his efforts to win the uncommitted and undecided to the Union. Consequently, the governor worked tirelessly to speed the project through the bureaucratic machinery.

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at the battles of Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Atlanta, and Nashville. James L. Bottles to Andrew Johnson, March 20, 1862, Johnson Papers; see also Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 218; Tennesseans in the Civil War, I, 230-33.

[13] J. H. Conner to Johnson, March 28, 1862, Johnson Papers.

[14] Robert G. Bails to Johnson, March 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 249-50.

Others also perceived the opportunities to be gained from the rebel prisoners. A northern officer and proud son of the Old Sod, Colonel James A. Mulligan, commanding an Irish brigade guarding Camp Douglas at Chicago, wrote Major General Henry W. Halleck, commander of the western theatre, contending that many of the prisoners in his area were not true rebels. "I believe there are many who became soldiers in the army of the rebels by compulsion or overwhelming necessity." From numerous conversations with the inmates, Mulligan found many loyalists who actually abhorred "this nefarious war." Having discovered a Tennessee regiment that was almost entirely Irish, the colonel eagerly proposed administering the oath of allegiance to these Sons of Erin and enlisting them into his own brigade. "I would willingly and fearlessly trust them," he asserted.[15] Colonel William Hoffman, commissary general of prisoners, drew the same impression of Tennessee regiments held at Lafayette, Indiana. He forwarded a petition expressing the Union sentiments of his charges to the secretary of war, Edwin M. Stanton.[16] Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton also received several petitions from rebel prisoners desiring to take the oath of allegiance and enlist in the U. S. Army or to be

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[15]James A. Mulligan to Henry W. Halleck, February 27, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 335. Apparently, few Fort Donelson prisoners were ever legally mustered into Federal service. War department policy enunciated in April, 1863, officially denied such requests. See Jonathan T. Dorris, Pardon and Amnesty Under Lincoln and Johnson (Chapel Hill, 1953), 24-25.

[16]William Hoffman to Montgomery C. Meigs, February 27, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 360.

released on their parole never to take up arms against the government. He likewise directed these petitions to Stanton.[17]

In response to the correspondence and entreaties concerning the Tennessee soldiers and in advance of a general cartel between the Federal and Confederate governments concerning the release and exchange of prisoners of war, Johnson took action. The Tennessee Unionist quickly dispatched Knoxville lawyer and political ally Connally F. Trigg to visit the northern prisons on behalf of his "misguided fellow Tennesseans." Armed with letters of instruction and introduction, Trigg left Tennessee on March 22, the same day that the governor told his audience that he would not intercede for any person until the rebels released their prisoners. Accompanying Trigg on his trip North was the irrepressible and indestructible patriot, politician, and polemicist, Parson William G. Brownlow, whose recent arrival at Nashville from his thralldom in East Tennessee had attracted national attention.[18] Instructed to transmit "letters or money or other articles of value and comfort not inconsistent with their condition as prisoners of war," Trigg should also address the Tennesseans in public at his discretion and hold private conversations with those desiring them.

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[17] Indianapolis Journal, March 12, 1862. One reason that northern governors like Tod and Morton were so interested in exchanging and releasing the Confederate prisoners was to remove a heavy financial burden from their states. According to the informal arrangements of the period, the governors were responsible for incarcerating the rebel prisoners. See for example, David Tod to Henry W. Halleck, February 20, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 288.

[18] Brownlow's celebrated description of his martyrdom earned him great acclaim and a prosperous livelihood. A prominent publisher offered him $10,000 for his story. New York Tribune, March 18, 1862.

Upon completion of his task, the commissioner would report his findings to the secretary of war.[19] Johnson obviously wanted to ascertain the extent of the Union sentiment among the prisoners and to explore the feasibility of paroling those willing to take the oath.[20] Securing the freedom of the Tennessee captives, however, would be a complex matter, as events would later prove; but it would be a process that would illustrate both Andrew Johnson's determination and a measure of the willingness of the Lincoln administration to give an indispensable political ally his way.

The Tennessee loyalist hoped that many of the prisoners could be freed and that their return home might promote the cause of Unionism in his badly divided state. He could not anticipate the myriad problems, both procedural and political, associated with the status of the prisoners and the loosely administered parole system at Camp Chase and elsewhere. Although he, Trigg, Maynard, and other Tennessee officials would become deeply involved in the problems related to the rebel prisoner issue, the final resolution would be shaped by forces and events far beyond the control of the military governor.

Due to the absence of a formal agreement or cartel between the Confederate and Federal governments concerning prisoners of war, the

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[19] Louisville Journal, March 28, 1862; Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 560n; Johnson to David Tod [and Connally F. Trigg], March 20, 1862, ibid., V, 218, 219.

[20] The governor permitted various individuals "representing themselves to be good Union men" passage North to visit their imprisoned relatives "with the view of having them renew their allegiance to the Government." See Johnson to Colonel Pitcairn Morrison, March 27, 1862, ibid., 248; Johnson to David Tod, May 27, 1862, RG 299, Records of the Commissary General of Prisoners.

parole and exchange of prisoners had been limited to agreements and ad hoc arrangements, often worked out informally between local commanders.[21] Commissioner Trigg had scarcely gotten started on his trip when congressional displeasure over the entire prisoner of war issue boiled over. Incensed over the Confederate government's holding some Union officers hostage in retaliation for the Federal piracy conviction of a group of rebel privateers, the House passed a resolution on March 24, opposing further exchanges until the Federal officers were released.[22] Confronted with the House resolution and a letter from Indiana Congressman Schuyler Colfax, complaining that Federal paroles were being given to rebels while "our imprisoned soldiers languish and die" in Confederate prisons, Lincoln capitulated, suspending further prisoner releases except by presidential orders.[23] At this

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[21]Negotiations between General John E. Wool, U.S.A. and General Howell Cobb, C.S.A., involving a comprehensive protocol, stalled over Wool's refusal to accept language implying de facto recognition of the Confederacy. Eventually General John A. Dix, U.S.A., and General D. H. Hill, C.S.A., signed an agreement on July 22, 1862, which became the basis of the parole and exchange of the Fort Donelson prisoners. Edwin M. Stanton to Galusha A. Grow, April 18, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 460-61; John A. Dix to Stanton, July 23, 1862, ibid., IV, 266.

[22]Behind this and similar resolutions lay the Enchantress affair and the widely publicized plight of Colonel Michael Corcoran and twelve other Federal prisoners named as hostages by Judah P. Benjamin. When the prize master of the schooner Enchantress and the crew of the C.S.A. privateer Jeff Davis were convicted of piracy, Benjamin ordered thirteen Union officers (Corcoran being the first), chosen by lot and held to guarantee the safe treatment of the privateers. Only when the Lincoln government agreed to release the rebels in return for Corcoran and his companions did the whole prisoner exchange take place. Cong. Globe, 37 Cong., 2 sess., 1341; Boatner, Civil War Dictionary, 175-76, 265-66.

[23]Schuyler Colfax to [Abraham Lincoln], March 25, 1862; Lorenzo Thomas to Henry W. Halleck, March 25, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 402-3.

point, Trigg, of course, had not been empowered to issue paroles or to release the prisoners into anyone's custody. The Tennessee envoy sought simply to communicate with interested prisoners and to encourage them to swear the oath of allegiance when given the opportunity. Nevertheless, the president's order placed the prisoners beyond the governor's reach for the moment. Thus prisoners of war had become a hot political issue, complicating rather than expediting the plans of the Tennessee tailor-politician.

In addition to problems with the prisoner cartel, Johnson's commissioner, Connally F. Trigg, his son Edward, and the peerless Parson Brownlow all encountered further difficulties when they visited the rebel Tennesseans at the height of a controversy involving a questionable parole system and an embarrassing imbroglio over the presence of both free black servants and slaves among the prison population.[24] The problem originated in the lack of clearly defined prison procedures rather than in the general incompetence or cupidity of prison officials; however, the repercussions left several individuals highly embarrassed, including Governor David Tod of Ohio. When the Donelson garrision was being transported North after the surrender, several officers, including the aforementioned Colonel James E. Bailey,

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[24]Brownlow, who was touring Ohio and other northern states on his prosperous lecture circuit recounting his sufferings under the rebels, visited Camp Chase and preached a sermon to the "intense disgust" of the Camp Chase inmates. On April 8, 1862, the determined divine delivered some brief remarks to the prisoners interned at Camp Morton, Indiana, meeting with taunts, jeers, and cries of "Put him out!" Louisville Journal, March 28, 1862; William B. Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons: A Study in War Psychology (New York, 1960 [1930]), 51; Indianapolis Journal, April 9, 1862.

inexplicably received paroles to St. Louis. "Why should they be paroled and not the balance of us is a mystery," mused fellow officer Colonel Randal W. McGavock.[25]

At St. Louis, disgruntled citizens complained that "home rebels ran after the officers, dined and feted them," until Halleck removed those "bold and defiant" prisoners from the influences of the civilian secessionists. In later dispatches, the exasperated Halleck ordered the offending officers to Columbus; however, by failing to specify Camp Chase, he left the Confederate officers the loophole of claiming the city rather than the prison as their legitimate destination.[26] With a number of Confederate officers enjoying the comforts of the state capital, ostentatious in their colorful uniforms and unsurrendered side arms, Governor Tod, the legislature, and the prison authorities all bore the brunt of the angry reaction. On March 30, Indiana Adjutant General Lazarus Noble wrote Stanton in self-righteous indignation. "We are greatly annoyed by the laxity prevailing at Columbus, Ohio." He complained that "Visitors avowedly disloyal are admitted." Moreover, paroled Confederate officers openly parade with their side arms, "talking secesh on the streets and in bar-rooms to the great detriment of our cause."[27]

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[25]McGavock, Pen and Sword, 597.

[26]Halleck to Lazarus Noble, February 26, 1862; F. A. Dick to [Francis P. Blair], March 5, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 325-26, 379-80.

[27]Lazarus Nobel to Stanton, March 30, 1862, ibid., III, 411.

Governor Tod, however, defended the camp operation and resisted all efforts to circumscribe the flow of visitors between Columbus and Camp Chase, insisting that allowing the curious to see their friends in confinement equalled "the expenditure of one hundred tons of [gun]powder upon the enemy." Consequently, a regular run of omnibuses carried visitors from the city to the prison. For twenty cents the "idlers" could travel to the camp and pass freely into all areas except the fenced prison compound.[28] Nevertheless, even as Connally F. Trigg moved among the prisoners and the sightseers, carrying out his mission for Johnson, special investigators from the Ohio state legislature and the war department were being ordered to the scene. Even General Halleck, whose earlier telegrams contributed to the confusion, sent a dispatch. "Complaint is made that you permit officers, prisoners of war, to visit Columbus where their conduct is very objectionable." Halleck warned the commanding officer, Colonel Granville Moody, "These indulgences must cease."[29]

In a speech demanding an investigation, an Ohio assemblyman charged that "Secesh gentlemen are lionized by kindred spirits" on the very streets and in the hotels of Columbus. Perhaps even more surprisingly, he had discovered that forty or fifty contrabands were waiting on their Confederate masters inside the prison, in open violation of Ohio's Free Soil constitution. Determined to correct the

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[28]Tod to Stanton, March 31, 1862, ibid., 412; H. M. Lazell to William Hoffman, July 13, 1862, ibid., IV, 196-97.

[29]Halleck to [Granville Moody], ibid., III, 417.

evils being permitted by the prison authorities, the legislature debated several resolutions condemning the practices and dispatched a select committee to investigate the reported abuses.[30]

Stanton told Governor Tod that he delayed a decision in the disposition of the Donelson prisoners until he could ascertain the views of Andrew Johnson: "Considerable difference of opinion exists in relation to the subject," he explained. Due to complaints about the license given rebel officers he directed Halleck to correct the maladministration immediately, asserting that the camp's commanding officer should be cashiered.[31]

Therein was the rub. Embarrassingly, Colonel Granville Moody, the post commander, was a Republican! The Democratic press chortled at the uncomfortable position in which the Ohio Republicans and the Lincoln administration found themselves. Caught in the political mire, the Republican-dominated legislature endorsed the findings of the select committee which investigated the sensational charges leveled against the prison administration. Unfortunately the charges were all true.[32] In describing the behavior of the paroled Confederate officers, the committee charged that

> They came wearing their side arms, stopped at the principal hotels, registering their names as Colonel, Captain, Major, with the significant letters, "C.S.A." added, appearing from day to day in rebel uniforms, (some of them gaudy, all

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[30]Cincinnati Enquirer, March 19, 1862.

[31]Stanton to Tod, March 30, 1862; Stanton to Halleck, March 30, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 410-11.

[32]Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons, 48; McGavock, Pen and Sword, 598; Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 8, 1862.

> of them noticeable,) in the offices and parlors and at the public tables of these hotels, and in the streets and drives of this city, frequenting the theatre, and other places of public amusement, and visiting the Senate and House chambers, where, with marked consideration, they have been invited to privileged seats within the bar.[33]

Perhaps even more outrageous to Ohio Free Soilers, the select committee found that contrabands, brought North with the rest of the prisoners, continued to serve their masters in prison.[34] In fact "the relation of master and slave being as rigorously maintained by the master and as fully recognized by the negroes and the other inmates of the prison, as it ever was in the State of Tennessee."[35] Despite the uproar in the legislature produced by the report, the Cleveland Plain Dealer dismissed the whole episode as just so much "buncombe." Yes, a few blacks, working as teamsters, cooks, and otherwise had been captured along with their employers or masters at Fort Donelson. Although certain slaves might obey their masters from habit in a given situation, slavery had not been introduced into Ohio by the Lincoln administration, either directly or indirectly. A chagrined Governor Tod protested that Colonel Moody, an ex-Methodist minister, had done his duty correctly and faithfully.[36]

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[33] So many courtesies and privileges reportedly had been extended to these officers that even "the poor and ignorant privates" in the prison complained. Cincinnati Enquirer, March 26, 1862; Indianapolis Journal, March 28, 1862.

[34] In Washington, Senator Sherman complained that the military authorities had imported slavery into Ohio. New York Tribune, April 3, 1862.

[35] Indianapolis Journal, March 29, 1862.

[36] Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 8, 1862; Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons, 48; McGavock, Pen and Sword, 598.

Having been duly informed from official sources that all complaints were unfounded and reassured that only "those expressly paroled" by himself to Columbus remained in the city, Halleck ordered those officers transferred from Columbus to Fort Warren, Massachusetts, thereby removing one of the more disturbing elements in the controversy.[37] Stanton also sent a special investigator, Assistant Inspector General Roger Jones, who, likewise, found the whole matter a bit of "moonshine." Jones left the camp on April 3, "perfectly satisfied," and filed a report to Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas, absolving Colonel Moody and Governor Tod. While delicately pointing out that only those prisoners convalescing with the approval of Tod and others "paroled by the commanders of the Departments of the Mississippi and of Western Virginia" had the limits of Columbus, the secretary's investigator affirmed that proper procedures had been humanely and properly enforced.[38] Jones also glossed over the contraband issue and the continuation of the master-slave relationship within the prison walls. Although the assistant inspector general acknowledged that some free black prisoners were actually incarcerated, he found that most were slaves and insisted that both slave and free, properly considered prisoners of war, received "exactly the same treatment as other prisoners."[39] By shrugging off the handling of the Confederate

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[37]Emphasis added. Catharinus P. Buckingham to Halleck, April 3, 1862; Halleck to George Thom, April 4; OR, Ser. 2, III, 420, 424; Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 8, 1862.

[38]Buckingham to Halleck, April 3, 1862; Roger Jones to Lorenzo Thomas, April 6, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 420, 427-28.

[39]Jones to Thomas, ibid., 427-28.

officers and their poorly defined paroles and by ignoring the question of the master-slave relationship, the inspector's report thereby detailed no conditions worthy of censure. Since these very issues were debated prominently in the press and elsewhere during this time, the Jones report constituted a monumental official cover-up. Governor Tod and the Republican legislature had been most severely humiliated. Given the growing radical pressure for a vigorous program of coercion, Washington did not need another problem, especially one that seemed to involve coddling rebels and condoning slavery.

Throughout the period of greatest controversy, Johnson's commissioner, Connally F. Trigg, moved among the prisoners, delivering letters and packages sent by anxious relatives and friends. Delighted with the news and the items from home, the Tennesseans seemed almost equally glad to see him, the Knoxville lawyer reported. Some old East Tennessee neighbors came forward to discuss their situation with him. One group, "stampeding" through the mountain gaps en route for free soil, was forced to enlist in a labor battalion and was later captured at Fort Donelson. "They do not wish to be exchanged," a reporter contended, "for that would be exchanging loyal for loyal, and to go into East Tennessee would, as yet, subject them to draft."[40] So many requested private conferences with Trigg that the personal interviewing process became impossible. Hence he elected to speak to them in large groups, including prisoners from states other than Tennessee. Mounting

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[40]Connally F. Trigg to Johnson, April 1, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 264-65; Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 9, 1862.

the guard walk between the fences, separating the officers and enlisted men, Trigg lectured the butternuts on the evils of secession and the glories of the Union. He requested that all those "so disposed" send their names to him at the American Hotel in Columbus. As he was concluding his remarks, "one reckless ranter" bellowed out, "Three cheers for JEFF DAVIS and the Confederacy." Perhaps a dozen Confederate officers responded. "The higher the rank the ranker the treason," one correspondent groused. However, "the masses most relied on" remained silent. Trigg reported that perhaps 500 or more Tennesseans responded to his appeal. Many would take the oath, he believed, but unfortunately the greater number would prefer the less demonstrative parole, permitting them "to have their liberty and go home, but with the privilege of remaining harmless rebels."[41] Nevertheless, Trigg remained hopeful on the eve of his trip to Washington where he intended to present the Tennesseans' case to Stanton. "I am gratified," he wrote, "to state that the feeling here among the citizens, so far as I have been able to gather it, is favorable to the release of such of the prisoners, as are willing to take the oath, and return to their loyalty."[42]

In the absence of clearly articulated procedures for the disposition of the prisoners, Johnson continued to press for action. In mid-April, the governor forwarded to Secretary Stanton a petition from some Tennesseans at Camp Douglas. Johnson told the secretary

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[41] Ibid., April 8-9, 1862; Trigg to Johnson, April 1, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 264-65.

[42] Trigg to Johnson, April 7, 1862, ibid., 275-77.

that the discharge of such prisoners who expressed a strong desire to renew their allegiance would exert "a great moral influence in favor of the perpetuity of the Union."[43] Nevertheless, the governor's arguments in favor of the contrite rebels failed to move the Lincoln administration which was painstakingly examining the political and military issues involved and slowly negotiating a comprehensive cartel with the Confederate military covering the release and exchange of prisoners of war.

On April 23 and 24, Maynard called upon Lincoln and Stanton, respectively, seeking answers to the Tennessee prisoner problem. Although he termed these conferences "satisfactory," Maynard later told the governor that no Tennessee prisoners could be paroled or exchanged at that time; in due time Johnson would be given authorization to free all that he considered loyal. For the present, Maynard counseled his friend that there were perhaps good and sufficient reasons to postpone action on this matter.[44] Given the touchy political issues involved, the Camp Chase parole and contraband controversy, the lurid accounts of "cruel and barbarous treatment" of Union captives at Richmond, and the absence of a prisoner cartel, it is easy to see why Washington was delaying and proceeding so carefully.[45]

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[43]Johnson to Stanton, April 17, 1862, ibid., 308; Tennessee Petitioners to Johnson, April 10, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 457-58.

[44]Horace Maynard to Johnson, April 24, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 329.

[45]Covington, Kentucky, residents reportedly selected a committee of the leading citizens to remonstrate against the release of the Fort Donelson prisoners lest they return "to pollute the soil of Kentucky." Indianapolis Journal, April 3, 1862; New York Tribune, April 12, 1862.

Indeed, Lincoln himself wrote Johnson later that spring to determine exactly his feelings. "Do you really wish to have Control of the question of releasing rebel prisoners? So far as they may be Tennesseans?" he asked, promising to keep the response secret.[46] The president's reference to the private nature of the communication reflected his sensibility to the explosive aspects of this issue. Giving Johnson control over the loyal Tennessee prisoners surely would be preempting the prerogatives of a military establishment already keenly sensitive to civilian interference in the conduct of the war. Also the president did not wish to run afoul of the congressional radicals, who hungered to shape the military and political character of reconstruction as well as the course of the war.

Unhesitatingly, however, the governor responded, "I do desire the disposition of the question of releasing the Tennessee prisoners." He conceded that many aspects of the problem must be considered; certain cases might require severity and others leniency. Nonetheless, the successful resolution of the issue would exert "a powerful influence throughout the State in our favor" and force the secessionists to be dependent upon the loyal state government.[47] Thus unswervingly, Johnson pursued his plan to restore his home state. He would swear all willing Tennessee rebel prisoners to loyalty, thereby removing them from the dangers of exchange and Confederate conscription. He sought to make

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[46]Abraham Lincoln to Andrew Johnson, June 4, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 439.

[47]Johnson to Lincoln, June 5, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, III, 642-43.

them dependent upon the Union for their continued freedom and to return them to Tennessee where their presence would embolden the loyalists.

Stanton remained unconvinced that releasing the Confederate prisoners would promote the cause of the Union. "The question in relation to prisoners is now under consideration," he wrote Tod on June 10. "If they are paroled great complaint is made by the friends of our prisoners in the South." Stanton placed little faith in a rebel parole. The Confederate government simply could pass legislation to revoke the parole and thus conscript all parolees. Mindful of this possibility, the secretary deemed it more expedient to hold the Confederate prisoners for the present than "to fight and take them again."[48]

Despite Secretary of War Stanton's opposition, the Tennessee military governor's views prevailed.[49] Assistant Secretary of War Peter H. Watson telegraphed Johnson to determine his recommendations and preferred conditions of release. Johnson replied on August 3, proposing immediate release upon parole, "all Tennessee prisoners who are willing to take the oath of allegiance & enter into bond for its faithful observance." The oaths and bonds should be forwarded to the military governor and then filed in the secretary's office.[50]

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[48]Stanton to Tod, June 10, 1862, ibid., 670.

[49]Stanton conceded that the Lincoln administration's policy had always been "to leave the exercise of that clemency to your judgment and discretion whenever the period arrives that it can properly be exercised." Stanton to Johnson, June 7, 1862, ibid., 659.

[50]Johnson to Peter H. Watson, August 3, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 593.

The war department acceded to Johnson's proposals and authorized him to examine the various Tennessee prisoners and free those according to the terms that he specified. This was an extraordinary arrangement. No other agreement similar to that granted to the Tennessee military governor was permitted by the department of war at this time. Johnson quickly dispatched ex-Governor William B. Campbell and Edmund Cooper, a Shelbyville lawyer and legislator, to visit the northern prisoners as his commissioners.[51]

By August 13, Campbell had reached Indianapolis, where a number of soldiers at Camp Morton signified a willingness to take the oath under the conditions stipulated by Johnson. However, their action incurred an "intensely bitter" response from other prisoners.[52] The Confederate government also caused a brief delay. After having agreed finally to a comprehensive protocol, involving the release and exchange of officers and enlisted men, the rebel government reneged momentarily on the release of certain high-ranking Union officers. When Washington suspended the entire prisoner exchange negotiations,

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[51]Appointments of Prisoner of War Commissioners, August 7, 1862; ibid., 598-99; Johnson to Stanton, August 9, 1862; Johnson to Lorenzo Thomas, August 9, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, IV, 362; Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 270n-71n. Unfortunately, Edmund Cooper wound up in a Confederate prison, being held until October, 1862, when he would be exchanged for Turner S. Foster, arrested by Johnson for treason. See Emerson Etheridge to Stanton, October 21, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, IV, 639.

[52]James A. Ekin to Montgomery C. Meigs, August 13, 1862; Ekin to Stanton, August 15, 1862, ibid., 387, 396.

the Davis administration relented and released the officers in question.[53]

Finally, with all obstacles surmounted, the Tennessee prisoners, freed in groups of one thousand, after having taken the oaths and given their bonds, began their long journey home. On August 15, several hundred marched out of Camp Morton, saluted by the jeers and taunts of their unreconstructed and unrepentant fellow inmates. The violence of the demonstration against the oath-takers at this prison left one rebel soldier dead and another slightly wounded before the guards restored order. Those unwilling to take the oath were exchanged and sent away to "a companionship of traitors."[54]

Despite Johnson's hopes for the salutary effect that the paroled Confederate prisoners of war might have on the Union cause, there is no evidence that their return aided the loyalists. Those soldiers that were exchanged were subject to the Confederate conscription laws, often returning to their original regiments. The Federal military establishment also resisted the enlistment of rebel parolees to fight against their former comrades as a matter of policy.[55] Moreover, the psychological uplift of the paroled prisoners was mitigated by the continued failure of the Federal army in Tennessee to maintain a stable presence. With the defensive perimeter continually

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[53] Indianapolis Journal, August 18, 1862; Lorenzo Thomas to Stanton, August 16, 1862, OR, Ser. 2, IV, 400.

[54] Indianapolis Journal, August 15, 1862; Chicago Tribune, August 13, September 4, 1862.

[55] Dorris, Pardon and Amnesty, 24-25.

threatened and often penetrated by Morgan, Forrest, and other elements of the Confederate army, the Union hopes rose and fell upon the fortunes of war, not upon the actions of Johnson. Yet, the military governor had tried and his actions in 1862 presaged the future.

Three years later in a crepe-shrouded Washington mourning a slain president, Andrew Johnson, thrust into the White House by the assassin's bullet, spoke of the future to a group of Indiana friends. "In reference to what my administration will be while I occupy my present position," he told the delegation from Indiana, "I must refer you to the past." Certainly the Tennessean's path had been primarily "one straightforward and unswerving course." That day he asserted the need to crush treason and rebellion. "It is not promulgating anything that I have not heretofore said to say that traitors must be made odious, that treason must be made odious, that traitors must be punished and impoverished."[56] However, Johnson, so often given to harsh and vituperative stump oratory, as we have seen, could easily be misinterpreted.

As military governor, the tailor-politician professed to intercede for no person until the Confederate government released their captives. Nonetheless, despite his adamant refusal, the loyal plebeian intervened time and time again for the Tennesseans, eventually requesting and receiving full responsibility for their paroles.[57]

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[56]New York Herald, April 23, 1865.

[57]Eventually given permission to recruit loyalists who had been conscripted into rebel services, the governor continued to receive letters and petitions all during his tenure, asking for the release

Three years later all those within earshot of the president's remarks could hear the emphasis on crimes and punishment, treason and rebellion, and justice and retribution. However, a close reading of the speech reveals that Johnson made subtle distinctions. Not only did the newly sworn chief executive reject the state suicide and territorial theories of his radical contemporaries, but he spoke of clemency and reconciliation. True, he reserved the full penalty of the law for the "conscious, intelligent and influential traitors--the leaders." Johnson denounced the Confederate establishment, "who have deceived thousands upon thousands of laboring men." To those deceived he offered "leniency, conciliation and amnesty."[58] Remembering his uncompromising public posture toward the rebel prisoners of war upon becoming military governor and his later efforts to secure the release of those avowedly repentant, one can better understand the presidential Andrew Johnson. To anyone familiar with his provisional government, Johnson's later use of amnesty and the pardoning power would not come as a surprise. The Tennessee Unionist continued to make violent and extreme public statements but in his dealings with ordinary citizens and even sometimes with members of the rebel elite, he demonstrated a

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of soldiers (and civilians, also) who were incarcerated in northern prisons. In many instances, Johnson arranged for relatives and parents to visit their erring kin, hoping that they would exert "a good influence over them in inducing them to consent to become loyal citizens in the event of their release." James B. Frye to Johnson, July 10, 1863, Adjutant General's Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Johnson to David Tod, May 5, 27, 1862, RG 249.

[58] New York Herald, April 23, 1865.

greater sympathy and clemency than his bitter declamations might suggest.

CHAPTER IV

ANDY, THE GENERALS, AND THE GAUDY EPAULET: THE POLITICS OF WAR

When he returned to Washington in the spring of 1861, Johnson busied himself in supporting the Lincoln war policies and calling for the redemption of his home state, especially the citadel of Unionism, East Tennessee. His electrifying philippics against the rebels played to appreciative galleries and revitalized flagging northern spirits bewildered by military reverses and confused councils. Rather than allying with that element of the northern Democracy which promoted conciliation and appeasement, the Tennessee Unionist urged a vigorous prosecution of the war, thereby quieting radical suspicions about his position and cementing a bond of trust and mutual respect with the beleaguered Lincoln administration. "Let the energies of the Government be redoubled, and let it go on with this war--not a war upon sections, not a war upon peculiar institutions anywhere," he insisted, "but let the Constitution and the Union be its frontispiece." Asserting that the rebels formed their Confederacy out of naked ambition, Johnson pointed to the elevation of Jefferson Davis and other former senators to high positions in the "pseudo-republic." "If they could not rule a large country, they thought that they might rule a small one," he concluded.[1]

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[1]Speech in Support of Presidential War Program, July 27, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 641, 627, 634.

Although he scorned both abolitionists and rebels as disunionists, it was the crowd-pleasing and gallery-rousing polemics against the secessionists that caught the attention of a desperate North. "I would have them arrested; and, if convicted, within the meaning and scope of the Constitution, by the Eternal God I would execute them," he thundered. "Sir, treason must be punished," he declared. "Its enormity and the extent and depth of the offense must be made known."[2] Such sentiments endeared him to the radicals. Ultimately, he was appointed to the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, often a radical cabal of legislative oversight that remained an infectious thorn in the side of the president throughout the war. Given his staunch stand for the Union, Johnson was a natural if often criticized choice for military governor of Tennessee when Forts Henry and Donelson fell to Federal blood and iron in February, 1862, thereby setting in motion Lincoln's fragmentary plans for reconstructing the state.[3]

Appointed to the office of military governor on March 3, 1862, Johnson's powers were both military and civil. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton defined the position for him:

> You are hereby appointed Military Governor of the State of Tennessee, with authority to exercise and perform, within the limits of that state, all and singular, the powers, duties and functions pertaining to the office of Military Governor (including the power to establish all necessary

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[2]Speech in Reply to Senator Lane, March 2, 1861, ibid., 354.

[3]Rumors that Johnson would be selected as the head of the provisional government blossomed with the news of Nashville's capture. See Chicago Tribune, February 21, 1862; Cincinnati Enquirer, February 20, 1862.

> offices and tribunals, and suspend the writ of Habeas Corpus) during the pleasure of the President, or until the loyal inhabitants of that state shall organize a civil government in conformity with the Constitution of the United States[.][4]

The selection of Johnson, however, outraged the secessionists and even dismayed many of the old-line Whigs, perhaps still smarting from the Tennessee Democrat's successful appropriation of the patronage. "It is a bitter pill for them to swallow," observed the Nashville Times.[5] Thomas A. Scott, assistant secretary of war, and the commander of the Federal force in the area, Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell, both remonstrated with their superiors against the Tennessean's appointment. Sent by Stanton to Nashville to help expedite military operations in the area, Scott warned that the senator was not a prudent choice, although "I know of no man personally I would rather see in that position than A. Johnson." Theorizing that the appointment would be used by the rebel leaders to rally opposition against the Union cause, he advised that Johnson's hold over the masses had been weakened by the defection of that element's leaders. Indeed, "many of the influential men connected with those classes which he controlled are now numbered among his enemies." Many people preferred some other

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[4]Stanton to Johnson, March 3, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 177.

[5]Nashville Times, March 8, 1862. One northern journalist observed that the news of the appointment generated "a lively sensation" in Nashville. "The secesh spit fire at the mention of it. Many of the loyal shake their heads dubiously over it. Fear for his personal safety influences the latter class." Andrew Johnson reportedly was "more obnoxious to the Tennesseans than any man in the Union," prompting certain correspondents to predict that he would be assassinated in a week! New York World, March 14, 1862; Indianapolis Journal, March 4, 1862.

"reliable man," like William B. Campbell, who would not "draw party lines and create fresh troubles."[6] Clearly adamant in his opposition, Buell echoed Scott in urging reconsideration of the appointments. "I have been concerned to hear that it is proposed to organize a provisional government for Tennessee," he confided to his friend and fellow Democrat, George B. McClellan. The general-in-chief quickly reminded Buell that Johnson's appointment and the provisional government was the president's idea.[7] Louisa B. Pearl, wife of a Confederate soldier and Nashville boarding-house keeper, aptly and succinctly summed up the feelings of herself and her neighbors: "Andy Johnson is Gov. of Tennessee--impolitic appointment--."[8]

Yet Johnson was returning to the furnace of treason, still confirmed in the righteousness of his cause and perhaps in the certitude of his success. Believing, like other Unionists, that his fellow citizens but needed a bracing draught of patriotism and their loyalty would be revived and restored, he did not clearly see the obstacles that lay before him or the trials that would temper his spirit and kindle his rage. Andrew Johnson would often midjudge his fellow Tennesseans, but he never lost his Jacksonian faith in their ultimate

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[6]Thomas A. Scott to Stanton, March 4, 1862, Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[7]Declaring that Lincoln's decision was final, McClellan explained, "I think your dispatch advising against it arrived too late." Don Carlos Buell to George B. McClellan, March 6, 1862; McClellan to Buell, March 7, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, X, pt. 2, p. 11, 611.

[8]Louisa Brown Pearl, War Time Journal, March 6, 1862, J. Emerick Nagy Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

goodness and wisdom. Nor did he wish to stray heedlessly from those august principles of constitutional government which he imbibed in the heroic age of Thomas Hart Benton, Felix Grundy, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and Andrew Jackson that represented his formative years.

Even before the new governor arrived, Buell sought to disabuse him of any unrealistic notions. "I have seen and conversed somewhat frequently with the most prominent Union men in and around Nashville," he noted. "They are true, but the masses are either inimical or overawed by the tyranny of opinion and power that has prevailed, or waiting to see how matters turn out."[9]

In his dispatch to Washington, Thomas Scott confided that "General Buell is managing matters with great prudence" and indicated that Johnson as military governor might upset the good relationships thus established. "This would undoubtedly be the effect if they had cause to believe that the establishment of a military Government was placed in hands that would rule them with despotic power."[10] Johnson's violent opposition to secession had made him anathema to the rebels in the Democratic party and his support of the Breckinridge ticket in 1860 later coupled with his usurpation of the patronage had made him persona non grata to many Whigs. Despite these obstacles Lincoln apparently considered him the man for the job.[11] Even later Andrew

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[9]Buell to Johnson, March 11, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 195-96.

[10]Scott to Stanton, March 4, 1862, Stanton Papers.

[11]Johnson was such a controversial appointment that some observers saw in the resistance to him a harbinger of ill-fortune to the whole practice of using military governors. "It is the opinion

Johnson remained the indispensable central pivot in his plan to reconstruct the state. But there was one compelling reason that perhaps would make Johnson a happier choice than some others. His loyalty was unquestionable. Scott, apparently after talking with various Unionists on the scene in Nashville prior to the arrival of the military governor, had promoted William B. Campbell as a better alternative. Yet, Campbell had cultivated an ambiguous political posture during the secession upheaval which now raised reasonable doubts about his true loyalties. On the eve of the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, many rebels were convinced that he might still cast his lot with the South and even accept a military command.

Campbell's own sister admonished him to state his position clearly in the period after the referendum on secession and to rise to the cause of Tennessee. "Dear Brother you said that the time might come when your service might be needed in the State & that you would go with your State--" she reminded. "Believe me, the time has come when your services are needed," she observed. "Hide not your light under a bushel," the sister pleaded, although she promised to keep his views confidential and stated her own allegiance to the South.[12] Campbell received a constant stream of correspondence

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of many loyal and intelligent men in Tennessee and elsewhere," one commentator declared, "that the President's plan of appointing as Military Governor of Seceded States citizens of those States, works just the reverse of what is probably thereby contemplated." Johnson antagonized both the secessionists who viewed him as a traitor and the loyalists who bore old wounds from previous political skirmishes. Meanwhile, "the wavering openly say they would prefer a man from some other State." New York Tribune, June 21, 1862.

[12]Virginia C. Shelton to Campbell, June 25, 1861, Campbell Papers.

from persons hopeful of obtaining his influence in the Confederate government or entreating him to take a military command. One Sparta rebel sought the former governor's assistance in securing a position as a special officer in "charge of said sequestered effects" of those persons whose property had been seized by the Confederate authorities.[13] Private citizens and even members of the state legislature continually wanted the Mexican war veteran's military services on behalf of the Confederacy as late as 1862. George M. Gordon, an eager Columbia warrior, told Campbell that "there is no man in the States of the Confederacy who I would rather serve under . . . than yourself."[14] Just before the decisive Federal victories that opened the state to occupation, twenty-seven Tennessee house and eighteen senate members tendered the ex-governor the position of brigadier general in the rebel army, "believing that you could be of incalculable benefit in the present crisis."[15] Even his own family fully expected him to "stand by Tennessee even though he may deplore the madness that rushes her on the sorrows of no ordinary character."[16] Later

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[13]H. S. Eunick to Campbell, August 8, September 20, 1861, ibid.

[14]George M. Gordon to Campbell, August 21, 1861, ibid. Gordon later observed following a communication from the former governor, "I felt satisfied that our opinions politically were the same--" indicating that "we could not differ much as to our duty to our Country in the present Crisis." Gordon to Campbell, September 3, 1861, ibid.

[15]James House, H. T. Carr, S. H. Woods and others, February 1, 1862, ibid. See also letters of Nathaniel Baxter, February 9, 1862, and P. Anderson, February 10, 1862, ibid.

[16]Undated letter, circa 1861, in the handwriting of Margaret H. Campbell to My Dear Sister [Virginia C. Shelton], ibid.

a friendly northern journal pointed out that Campbell had to decline Jefferson Davis' offer of a command three times--once when war began, once when General Felix Zollicoffer was killed, and once when Johnston was at Bowling Green.[17]

Under these circumstances it is clear why Thomas Scott, who probably did not fully understand, if at all, the ramifications of Campbell's broad support, found the Lebanon banker such a popular figure in Middle Tennessee. He was certainly acceptable to the Whig faction, having been nominated for governor in 1861, and given his ambiguous and ambidextrous dealings with rebels and fellow-travelers, he was certain to be embraced by those whose sympathies lay with the South. It is highly unlikely that the Mexican War hero could have so regularly been importuned to play a role in the Confederate military establishment without some overt or covert encouragement on his own part. As his sister observed, Campbell was an "old war horse" who could only "with difficulty keep from neighing and pawing for the conflict--."[18]

Whether he could work with the Republican administration would be determined by coming events, for Campbell represented the old-line Whig conservative wing of Tennessee politics that would be sorely tried by the fluid and volatile mixture of idealism, ineptitude, and expediency that passed for the Lincoln reconstruction policy. The

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[17]Philadelphia Press, January 20, 1863.

[18]Margaret H. Campbell to Virginia C. Shelton, August 22, 1861, Campbell Papers.

subsequent trials that lay before the provisional government of Tennessee would either vindicate Lincoln's choice of Andrew Johnson over William B. Campbell (or someone from his camp) or confront the president with the vision of the road not taken.

In an effort to permit Johnson to perform military functions, command subordinates, draw equipment and supplies, and perhaps to maintain open communication between the governor's office and the Federal army, Lincoln commissioned the Tennessean a brigadier, perhaps giving an additional dash of dignity to an awesomely complicated and conflict-ridden responsibility.[19] This added tangle of gilt, brass, and braid served to agitate and sour relations between Johnson and various commanders in the Department of the Ohio, already made sensitive by the governor's constant pressure for an expedition into East Tennessee.

Long before Johnson was appointed, he prodded Lincoln for military action to relieve his home section. Pointing to Confederate efforts to conscript citizens loyal to the Union, the East Tennessean explained that "our brave men are daily organizing, and are only waiting for you to place arms in their hands with which they may strike in defence of themselves & their Country--." He also reminded the president of the strategic value of the section, in that 80,000 Confederate troops passed over the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad during the period before July 27, 1861. Given the military implications of the vital railroad and the plight of the loyal

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[19]Stanton to Scott, March 8, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, X, pt. 2, p. 20.

mountaineers, his region required urgent attention. "Your Excellency will at once see that the condition of the people of East Tennessee is such as to require the most prompt and energetic action on the part of our Government--."[20]

Between the summer of 1861 and the occupation of Nashville during the winter of 1862, Johnson (and others) kept up a steady stream of requests to Lincoln, the secretary of war, and even commanders in the field, agitating for the deliverance of Tennessee and especially the loyal eastern hill folk. On the eve of an abortive revolt by East Tennessee Unionists (which culminated in a series of bridge-burnings and drum-head executions in retaliation), Johnson requested military support from Brigadier General George H. Thomas, commanding a contingent of new volunteers in Kentucky.[21] Made frustrated and petulant by such civilian interference in the military situation, Thomas was adamant. "If the Tennesseans are not content and must go, then the risk of disaster will remain with them," Thomas warned, pleading inadequate transportation and clothing. "I can only say I am doing the best I can." Sensitive to the constant complaints about the ineptness and inactivity of the Federal army that prevailed after

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[20]William B. Carter and Johnson to Abraham Lincoln, August 6, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 669-70.

[21]On the evening of November 8, 1861, a number of important bridges on the East Tennessee and Virginia and East Tennessee and Georgia railroads were destroyed by Union incendiaries. Squads of soldiers rounded up dozens of suspects, filling the jails with Unionists and sympathizers. Several men were hanged under court martial proceedings with their bodies left dangling to demonstrate the severity of Confederate justice. Coulter, Brownlow, 172.

Manassas, the officer defended his superior. "Our commanding general is doing the same, and using all his influence to equip a force for the rescue of Tennessee."[22]

When Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell took over command of the Department of Ohio on November 15, 1861, he replaced General William T. Sherman, who had become so confused by hostile citizens, urgent calls for troops by outpost commanders, attacks by small enemy units, and demands by politicians for an immediate offensive that he lost his sense of reality. He told the then visiting secretary of war, Simon Cameron, that Tennessee could not be invaded with less than 200,000 men! Buell thus inherited a fragmentary army of ill-equipped and poorly organized troops, numbering perhaps 23,000. At that time the department consisted of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and the eastern portion of Kentucky. Tennessee was added with the Union victories at Forts Henry and Donelson.[23]

The cautious Buell, a strict disciplinarian and paper generating tactician, already understood Johnson's concern for East Tennessee before their paths crossed in Nashville. After spending most of October and part of November in Kentucky with the Federal units,

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[22]George H. Thomas to Johnson, November 7, 1861, OR, Ser. 1, IV, 342-43. Horace Maynard and Johnson spent most of October and early November with the Federal Units operating in Kentucky. See Francis F. McKinney, Education in Violence: The Life of George H. Thomas and the History of the Army of the Cumberland (Detroit, 1961), 117-18.

[23]James R. Chumney, Jr., Don Carlos Buell: Gentleman General (Ph.D. dissertation, Rice University, 1964), 29-30; Boatner, Civil War Dictionary, 606.

Johnson and Horace Maynard returned to Washington to urge Lincoln and the "Young Napoleon" George B. McClellan to mount an invasion of East Tennessee. Both the president and the general-in-chief concurred in the widsom and necessity of such an enterprise.[24] Indeed, in a long letter a month earlier, McClellan had advised Buell that upon assuming the command of the Department of Ohio, he should invade East Tennessee and occupy the railroad at Knoxville to sever communications between Virginia and the rest of the Cenfederacy.[25] However, Buell remained committed to a different strategy. Ironically, the plan for the invasion of East Tennessee was vigorously supported by one of Buell's own officers, George H. Thomas, then commanding the right wing of the army of the Ohio.[26] Nonetheless, this approach was too radical for the orthodox West Pointer.

Rather than follow the president's preference for an invasion of East Tennessee, Buell pressured McClellan to permit an offensive directed against Nashville. Although McClellan truly desired a demonstration against East Tennessee to aid in his campaign against

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[24]Johnson and Maynard to Buell, December 7, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 43-44; Chumney, Buell, 32-45. Lincoln had drafted an invasion plan as early as October 31, 1861. See OR, Ser. 1, LII, pt. 1, pp. 191-92.

[25]McClellan to Buell, November 7, 1861, ibid., IV, 342.

[26]McKinney, Education in Violence, 108-9, 112. Lincoln wanted the attack made through the Cumberland Gap coincidental with military movements in eastern Virginia. Thomas was to carry the Cumberland Gap, cut the railroad between Chattanooga and Richmond, and hold the mountain region for the Union. Thomas himself envisioned a departure from orthodox strategy by proposing to cut his forces loose from his base of supplies, subsist his troops on the enemy's countryside, and rally the Union folk of East Tennessee to the flag.

Richmond, he acquiesced in his subordinate's strategy to the extent of suggesting a two-pronged attack on both sectors with the majority of the troops being committed against Middle Tennessee. Pleading bad roads and great scarcity of provisions, Buell remained opposed to an offensive through the mountainous gaps.[27]

Lincoln made it perfectly obvious that he was both disappointed and distressed by Buell's insistence on the Nashville strategy. "I would rather have a point on the Railroad south of Cumberland Gap, than Nashville, first, because it cuts a great artery of the enemies' communication, which Nashville does not, and secondly because it is in the midst of loyal people, who would rally around it, while Nashville is not." Moreover, "I cannot see why the movement on East Tennessee would not be a diversion in your favor, rather than a disadvantage, assuming that a movement toward Nashville is the main object."[28]

Then the Battle of Mill Springs breached the eastern pivot of the Confederate army and U. S. Grant's actions against the river forts dislodged Albert Sidney Johnston at Bowling Green. Despite Lincoln's wishes that Buell seek "to cut the communications between the Mississippi Valley and East Virginia, to protect our Union friends in Tennessee and re-establish the Government of the state," the commander of the Department of the Ohio, by delaying, managed to present the plum

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[27]Chumney, Buell, 48-50.

[28]Lincoln to Buell, January 6, 1862, Basler, Works of Lincoln, V, 91.

of Nashville to a victory-starved North.[29] Due to an extraordinary set of circumstances, he had, in effect, subverted the wishes of both his general-in-chief and commander-in-chief; but, through his own skillful persuasion and military maneuvering, coupled with Grant's action against the river forts, earned their reserved approbation. "The President is much pleased with the cautious vigor of General Buell," Stanton informed his man on the scene as the northern euphoria over the fall of Nashville erased momentarily the disappointment over the aborted plans to relieve East Tennessee.[30] However, the issue would not die and would return to haunt Buell.[31]

The general's experience in Kentucky revealed two areas of vulnerability that would plague him throughout the remainder of his soon-to-be-curtailed career.[32] First, he displayed a deliberate,

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[29]Chumney, Buell, 48-49.

[30]Ibid., 43-58; McClellan to Buell, November 7, 1861, OR, Ser. 1, IV, 342; Stanton to Scott, March 8, 1862, ibid., X, pt. 2, p. 20.

[31]When he learned that East Tennessee would not be invaded in November, 1861, "Mr. Johnson turned from his informant, and entered his hotel without one word, in utter despair." The Tennessee troops denounced the decision rescinding the advance on the poorly defended Cumberland Gap, believing that an opportunity to rescue their friends in the Tennessee mountains had been wasted. Clipping from Bowling Green Courier, November 26, 1861, Mary Polk Branch Scrapbook, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

[32]One historian has suggested that the tendency of Halleck and Buell to avoid operations leading to engagements with the rebel army in Kentucky and Tennessee was part of a general inferiority complex among many northern commanders, especially George B. McClellan. See Michael C. C. Adams, Our Masters the Rebels: A Speculation on Union Military Failure in the East, 1861-1865 (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), viii, 95, 109, 157, and passim.

cautious approach to military operations that, when repeated later, would frustrate his superiors and highly placed politicians like Andrew Johnson. His masterful inactivity during the winter of 1861-62 did not go unnoticed. Secondly, he failed to appreciate the political implications of his military efforts. Although he would scrupulously conform to McClellan's admonition to respect private property and the southern domestic institutions, he missed the larger import of the general-in-chief's observation concerning the politics of military campaigns. "It is possible that the conduct of our political affairs . . . is more important than that of our military operations."[33] The maelstrom of later events would make the dashing Young Napoleon a prophet.

Given the nature of Johnson's contacts in Washington and the porous character of the city's bureaucracy, both civil and military, it is likely that both the military governor and the commander of the Army of the Ohio already understood the other's true feelings about one another.[34] Not only did Buell object to the concept of establishing a provisional government in Tennessee, but he thought that "it would be injudicious at this time," believing the whole arrangement superfluous and unnecessary.[35] His protest to McClellan

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[33]McClellan to Buell, November 7, 1861, OR, Ser. 1, IV, 342.

[34]Disgusted with the army's slow response to the East Tennessee invasion, Johnson had already intrigued against Thomas and attempted to have him replaced by General Ormsby M. Mitchell, all this despite Thomas' support for the relief expedition. McKinney, Education in Violence, 114-16, 484n.

[35]Buell to McClellan, March 6, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, X, pt. 2, p. 11.

could have scarcely been kept secret amidst all the gossip broadcast so carelessly in war-time Washington. For his part, Johnson philosophically disliked the military in general and soon began to cultivate a warm distaste for Buell in particular. "I may say I hate war and love peace," the Tennessean had proclaimed in the secession winter. "I would rather wear upon my garments the tinge of the shop and the dust of the field, as badges of the pursuits of peace, than the gaudy epaulet upon my shoulder, or a sword dangling by my side, with its glittering scabbard, the insignia of strife, of war, of blood, of carnage."[36]

Now he bore the gaudy epaulet, at least symbolically. And forced to hammer the plowshare of peace into a glittering sword, he would wield it manfully and tirelessly, resolving to make his strokes count despite the cupidity and incompetence of the Union generals around him. "If I can be sustained in carrying out the object of the administration in restoring Tennessee to her former status in the Union and in not being dependent upon staff officers and Brigadier Generals--" he fumed, slightly more than six weeks after arrivng, "it can be accomplished in less than three months."[37] Thus Buell and Johnson would begin their uneasy tenures with avowed and well-cultivated suspicions about the appropriateness of the other's position. These

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[36]Speech on the Seceding States, February 5-6, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 222. See also Johnson to James St. Cloud, October 27, 1862, Johnson Papers.

[37]Johnson to Lincoln, April 26, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 336-37.

suspicions would smolder into a searing distrust and finally burst into mutual hostility.

Consistent with McClellan's warnings about respecting private property and southern institutions, then Brigadier and later Major General Buell issued his famous "Roasting-ear" order in Kentucky on February 12, 1862, forbidding the unauthorized entry of soldiers into civilian grounds, fields, and buildings. Buell's General Orders No. 13 thus provided a measure of protection to the gardens and cornfields later that spring on the dusty road to Shiloh.[38] He further allayed the fears of Nashville rebels upon occupying that city by meeting with the mayor and a delegation of prominent citizens. Those who had earlier expected the city to be shelled to ashes and rubble were relieved by the orderly behavior of his troops and the general's solicitude. Mayor Richard B. Cheatham proclaimed that the "interview was perfectly satisfactory to the Committee, and there is every assurance of safety and protection to the people, both in their persons and in their property." In another order issued February 26, 1862, the general repeated his injunction against appropriating private property. "Peaceable citizens are not to be molested in their persons or property." Indeed, "Soldiers are forbidden to enter the residences or grounds of citizens on any plea without authority."[39] Such orders earned the general the grudging respect of the Tennessee rebels who

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[38]See OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, 26; T. J. Wright, History of the Eighth Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Infantry (St. Joseph, Mo., 1880), 44.

[39]McKee, The Great Panic, 32-34; OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 26.

had already witnessed the undisciplined mobs of Confederate troops earlier fleeing the capital and doubtlessly feared a general pillage by the Union soldiers.[40] "Buell came in at night, the troops were in perfect discipline, and completely amazed the poor duped people here by their orderly behavior."[41] During the early stages of the Federal occupation many rebels were pleasantly surprised. For "Gen. Buell keeps his troops out of the city, & tries to keep his troops under restraint; he has promised to protect private property & so far has done so."[42] In response to scattered "instances of scandalous misdemeanor" by Federal troops he placed guards around every house whose owners or occupants asked for protection. By the time Johnson received his appointment, ten or twelve Nashville area houses were already under Buell's protection.[43]

The general moved with great caution, hoping to convince the Nashville rebels that he would not trample upon their sensibilities. He contacted the editors of one of the newspapers and obtained an

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[40]Angered by the unheroic flight of Governor Harris and other political leaders, some Confederate troops reportedly went on a rampage, pillaging and breaking into the houses of certain of the decamping politicians. The palatial home of Democrat Andrew Ewing, a Davidson County lawyer and former congressman, was vandalized, supposedly by rebel cavalrymen who allegedly fed their horses in his parlor "using the Sofas for troughfs [sic]." New York World, March 7, 1862; Rees W. Porter to Johnson, March 1, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 168.

[41]Muriel Davies MacKenzie, comp., "Maggie!" Maggie Lindsley's Journal (Southbury, Conn., 1977), 8.

[42]Ellen C. McClung to [Eliza I. McClung], March 6, 1862, Campbell Papers.

[43]New York World, March 7, 1862.

unusual quid pro quo from the erstwhile Confederate journal. "It will change its course gradually and in a few days give reasons for supporting the Union cause based upon the generous and liberal treatment on the part of the Government--a treatment so widely different from that they had been taught to expect."[44] Whether it was this sort of policy toward the unreconstructed rebels or his slowness to advance on East Tennessee or a lack of appreciation for Johnson's political power, the Ohio-born West Pointer proceeded to annoy the military governor.

Already skilled at sniping at the military's overall strategy, Governor Johnson found a way to broadcast his growing dissatisfaction with General Buell's treatment of civilians. Writing from Nashville on March 29, a New York correspondent, seemingly with easy access to the governor, complained of the tolerance accorded rebels by the military. Disgusted with the "ease and swiftness our misguided brethren of the South obtain 'passes,' and 'fugitives from service or labor,' and a variety of such like little offices of our military powers that be," the journalist reported that the state's chief executive was not pleased.

> My word for it, Gov. Johnson has no sympathy with it. To his surprise he has been so embarrassed by the military leniency. His policy is the perpendicular one, and it will prevail. He may not be considered by female men and women, "very much of a gentleman," but he will make old ladies of

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[44] Scott to Stanton, March 5, 1862, Stanton Papers. This may have been George Baber, the editor of the Nashville Republican Banner, who momentarily cooperated with the Johnson administration by renouncing his earlier secessionist views. Louisville Journal, July 9, 1862.

> both sexes stand in awe and fear of the Star Spangled Banner.[45]

These two men, Buell and Johnson, were on a collision course. It should be observed that the question of the general's leniency became a source of complaint at a time when the governor was following a well publicized policy of coercion. While Buell was winning plaudits from secessionists for his gentlemanly behavior, Johnson was suppressing and dismissing the Nashville city council, arresting the mayor for treasonable language, closing down newspapers and publishing houses, preparing to swear whole classes of people to allegiance, and engaging in other flamboyant and highly publicized acts of coercion. Having already differed over the correct strategy for liberating Tennessee, the former tailor and the ex-West Pointer were seemingly in profound disagreement over certain political issues. Although the general may not have been as disposed to leniency as he would be portrayed and the governor was certainly not as committed to retribution as he posed, the issue of the proper approach to use against the secession element served to complicate the already highly charged atmosphere.

For his part, the governor maintained a high profile of coercion and retribution toward "the deceivers of the people,"

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[45] New York World, April 4, 1862. Later that year, in his controversial retrograde movement to counter Confederate General Braxton Bragg's summer offensive in Kentucky, Buell abandoned hardfought gains in Middle Tennessee and allowed Nashville to be invested. A journalist sympathetic to Johnson dryly noted that Buell might make Nashville once more his headquarters to the delight of the local rebels. "They think he is a perfect gentleman." Philadelphia Press, September 17, 1862.

ordering levies on the property of prominent secessionists, the taking of hostages in retaliation for guerrilla raids, and, most prominently, exacting an oath of allegiance from selected categories of people. All these executive actions of coercion were highly publicized and often stage managed in such a manner as to cloak the tailor politician in a mantle of self-righteous loyalty.[46] This allowed him cleverly to indict Buell and what was later conceded to be the official policy of the Federal army by contrast, by innuendo, and by admonition.[47]

The general was a West Pointer, schooled to a rigorous adherence to the rules of soldierly behavior. Impatient with civilian interference in military matters, he jealously resisted the governor's efforts to shape his policies and direct his operations which he rightly considered to be his responsibility. However, Buell was perhaps guilty of misjudging the extent and force of Johnson's political influence. Unskilled himself in the rough and tumble world of politics, the pedantic and cautious general would soon discover that his command was not only fighting on hostile soil against a

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[46]This phase of the reconstruction process will be discussed in detail in a succeeding chapter.

[47]During the latter part of 1862 and 1863, Major General Buell's conduct of operations in Tennessee and Kentucky came under official scrutiny by a military commission which was critical of his offensive and defensive strategy but, nevertheless, exonerated him from wrong doing in exercising lenity toward inhabitants in disaffected areas. The commission concluded that "what is familiarly known as the conciliatory policy" was indeed "at that time understood to be the policy of the Government." Consequently, Buell deserved neither praise nor disapproval, having violated "no orders on the subject, because there were none." See Chumney, Buell, 1-27, and passim; OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 1, pp. 8-9.

resourceful and persistent enemy army, but he would be forced to defend his own competence and integrity from a number of highly placed political critics, including Andrew Johnson. Had the general been more aware of the military governor's political clout, he perhaps would have been more discreet and circumspect in his dealings with the rebels. However, it is almost certain that he and Thomas A. Scott had reached a mutual conclusion that some other person like William B. Campbell would have been a better choice to lead the provisional government; and perhaps also Buell might have been deliberately seeking to appease the wealthy elite "who have been heretofore aiding the rebellion--in many cases from sheer necessity," believing like Scott that a prudent course was the more fruitful.[48] On the other hand, the Nashville Union, the newly launched Johnson organ, sneered that it was "utter madness to think of winning over hardened rebel leaders by clemency." Asserting that the safety of Nashville and Unionism was imperiled by "too much lenity and forebearance already," the paper called for more extreme measures. "Let justice draw her sword and bring it down heavily."[49]

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[48] Scott to Stanton, March 4, 1862, Stanton Papers.

[49] Nashville Union, May 8, 1862. At one point, units of Buell's command were ambushed and captured at Murfreesboro by Morgan's raiders. Contrasting the hapless Union army with the daring rebels, the Union scorned the tactics and leadership of the Federal command which it blamed for the Murfreesboro fiasco. "The reason is that the Rebel leaders intended to fight when they began the Rebellion, while ours generally hope to conciliate the Rebels by being confiding and careless, and catching their runaway negroes." Ibid., July 16, 1862.

Meanwhile, the governor groused and complained. He began openly to repudiate appeasement and conciliation in a summer characterized by constant guerrilla raids and frequent threats on Nashville. Angered by the open pleasure exhibited by local secessionists over the almost ceaseless depredations resulting in destroyed bridges, wrecked railroads, burned houses, intimidated Unionists, and other acts of outrage, seemingly committed with impunity, he disavowed the olive branch and "the rose-water policy" in favor of a more stringent approach. For his own part he resolved to abandon his "exceedingly lenient and conciliatory" methods.[50] In a similar vein, Major William H. Sidell, attached to the adjutant general's office, Department of the Ohio, reported a long, rambling conversation with the governor on July 31. The Tennessee executive restated his misgivings about the present tendency of "treating rebels with lenity," declaring that "they must be made to feel the burden of their own deeds."[51] Given the governor's past habits of violent and vituperative threats against rebels, these remarks are hardly extraordinary if taken at face value. Having spent all spring and the preceding portion of summer in a highly visible campaign (as we shall soon see) against

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[50]Philadelphia Press, July 24, August 15, 1862. Like the Nashville Union, the Press may be properly regarded during this period as a Johnson paper. Published by John Forney, who also owned the Washington Chronicle, this newsheet often carried the byline of B.C.T. (for correspondent Benjamin C. Truman), who worked closely with Johnson and often reflected his views. See Benjamin C. Truman, "Anecdotes of Andrew Johnson, Century Magazine, LXXXV (1913), 435-40.

[51]William H. Sidell to James B. Frye, August 1, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, 242-43.

the city council, secessionist newspapers, various members of the Nashville elite, and other segments of the population, Johnson could have hardly needed to change his policy to a more stringent one. His remarks may be more properly construed as self-serving and a not-so-veiled indictment of Buell's so-called generosity toward the rebels. Moreover, had the general been more malleable regarding Johnson's more pressing concerns for the relief of East Tennessee and more successful in general, one might conjecture that the question of leniency toward the rebels might not have been such an overriding source of contention. Many of Buell's own officers also disagreed with his approach to the rebels. A fellow Ohioan and field officer with the Third Ohio Volunteer Infantry, Colonel John Beatty, termed the commander's policy "that of the amiable idiot." While deploring those officers condoning depredations, Beatty accused Buell of going to the opposite extreme and behaving like a dancing master.

> To the bushwhacker: "Am sorry you gentlemen fire at our trains behind stumps, logs, and ditches. Had you not better cease this sort of warfare? Now do, my good fellows, stop, I beg of you." To the citizen rebel: "You are a chivalrous people; you have been aggravated by the abolitionists into subscribing cotton to the Southern Confederacy; you had, of course, a right to dispose of your own property to suit yourselves, but we prefer that you would, in future, make no more subscriptions of that kind, and in the meantime we propose to protect your property and guard your negroes."[52]

One member of the Fourth Estate summed up Buell's bad habits succinctly: "Beyond guarding rebel property, returning loyal slaves and persecuting

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[52]Harvey S. Ford, ed., John Beatty: Memoirs of a Volunteer, 1861-1863 (New York, 1946), 117.

loyal officers for depredations, what has he done for the Union cause?"[53] It was not charges of inappropriate generosity alone, however, that undid the West Pointer but a series of missteps that ended with his stumbling over his sword (with considerable assistance from others, of course, including Andrew Johnson).

After Donelson the Confederate disasters had multiplied. Driven South from Columbus, Bowling Green, Nashville, and Murfreesboro, then yielding Kentucky and the western half of Tennessee, the beleaguered Army of Tennessee sought sanctuary at Corinth.[54] The dispirited ranks showed the results of the Mill Springs and the Middle Tennessee reverses. In January the proud army of the heartland numbered some 55,000 men but four months later General Albert Sidney Johnston could find less than 40,000 at Corinth. The next few months would bring the Army of Tennessee and the western forces of the Federals into a series of bloody collisions, resulting in both drawn and decisive battles that helped shape the course of the war and indelibly scarred the life and reputation of Don Carlos Buell.

It may be that Buell's rigid discipline and passion for details, planning, and organization obscured the weaknesses that eventually

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[53] Chicago Tribune, August 30, 1862.

[54] Unless otherwise noted, the foregoing sketch of the military operations in Tennessee is derived from Connelly, Army of the Heartland and Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865 (Baton Rouge, 1971); Peter J. Parish, The American Civil War (New York, 1975); James G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Lexington, Mass., 1969); Nevins, War for the Union; Kenneth P. Williams, Lincoln Finds a General: A Military Study of the Civil War (5 vols., New York, 1949-59).

led to his own undoing. The words of Secretary of War Stanton conveying Lincoln's compliment, "The President is much pleased with the cautious vigor of General Buell" would echo with great irony in the days following.[55] Gratified by the promotion of Buell to major general, Scott regarded him as a wise and prudent officer, wholly committed to the defeat of the rebels. "He is not so fast and dashing perhaps as some others," the assistant secretary conceded, "but his army is disciplined." However, Scott had great faith in the general's military skills and knowledge. "His moves are made with caution and well supported," the war department official argued, "and I believe that positions once taken by him will never be yielded if you will give him the aid from time to time in a military way that his Department may well require."[56]

As a military leader, Buell was a controversial figure in his own time and remains so today.[57] Yet, he was an ideal organizer and drill master. His precise, methodical, and ordered mind; his appetite

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[55]Stanton to Scott, March 8, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, X, pt. 2, p. 20.

[56]Scott to Stanton, March 4, 1862, Stanton Papers.

[57]Although leading military historians sometimes compare him to his friend George B. McClellan and scorn his failures against the Confederate forces, the general has his defenders. The older studies by Hall, Andrew Johnson; John C. Ropes, The Story of the Civil War: A Concise Account of the War in the United States of America Between 1861 and 1865 (3 vols., New York, 1933); and James Ford Rhodes, History of the American Civil War: 1861-1865 (New York, 1917), offer sympathetic treatment of the unfortunate Ohio military leader. Hall emphasizes Johnson's continuing dissatisfaction with the general, although he concedes that Buell made mistakes, especially by overestimating rebel strength. Hall, Andrew Johnson, 59-70. Meanwhile, Ropes argued that Lincoln and Halleck ignored Buell's judicious reasons for failing to march on East Tennessee, namely, the lack of sufficient

for detail and love of paperwork; his genuine concern for his troops; and his knowledge of equipment and tactics were responsible for molding the Army of the Ohio into a slow but dependable, highly motivated and finely drilled fighting force. Unfortunately, all too often he seemed reluctant to risk his troops.

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forces to guard his communications and to provide an adequate contingent to carry on an offensive at the same time in a barren and stripped countryside. Halleck simply restated the president's wishes, declaring the Federal army could survive on the same territory subsisting the rebel army. Ropes, Civil War, II, 413-14. In his study of the conflict, James Ford Rhodes portrayed Buell as the victim of western radicals, especially Indiana's Oliver P. Morton, who cruelly slandered the general as a rebel sympathizer. Rhodes, American Civil War, 178-79.

This theme is updated in some modern monographs. See especially Chumney, Buell, and McKinney, Education in Violence. McKinney, describing Johnson as "militarily ignorant," saw Buell's downfall as the consequence of "a contrived campaign of professional murder," carried out by the governors of Tennessee and Indiana. McKinney, Education in Violence, 153-54. Although not blameless, Buell was often the loser due to the governor's encroachments. Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 37-49.

Other modern military studies tend to confirm the unfavorable judgments of Buell held by Johnson, Lincoln, and others. Among the most relevant are T. Harry Williams, Lincoln and His Generals (New York, 1952); Williams, Lincoln Finds a General; Stephen F. Ambrose, Halleck: Lincoln's Chief of Staff (Baton Rouge, 1962); T. Harry Williams, The Military Leadership of the North and the South: The Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History (United States Air Force Academy, 1960); and Nevins, War for the Union. T. Harry Williams observed that Buell's gravest shortcoming was that he did not seem to sense any need for any celerity in movement on any line. Williams, Lincoln and His Generals, 184, and Military Leadership, 10-11. Kenneth P. Williams presented the general as a timid bungler, lacking the qualities of a combat commander. Williams, Lincoln Finds a General, IV, 25-143. Ambrose described the Ohio soldier as an unimaginative, cautious, and limited practitioner of gentlemanly warfare. Ambrose, Halleck, 92. "Buell was a brave, industrious, and loyal general, capable in routine operations and brilliant in logistics," Allan Nevins concluded. However, "he was either too cautious or too rigidly methodical to meet a great crisis successfully." Nevins, War for the Union, II, 288-89.

Meanwhile, "unconditional surrender" Grant still had the old rumors of John Barley Corn to live down and the jealousies and suspicions of Halleck to overcome. On March 13, having satisfied the western commander that all problems had been misunderstandings, Grant was restored to favor and ordered to keep his army in place at Savannah and Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee, until joined by Buell's force, whereupon Halleck would take direct command. At his refuge at Corinth, Johnston had been reinforced by the charismatic Creole, P.G.T. Beauregard, and the fighting Bishop and General Leonidas Polk.

From Johnston's sanctuary at Corinth, the Confederate army uncoiled and struck at Grant's army bivouaced in an ill-chosen position at Pittsburg Landing, catching the Union forces in confusion on April 3, with their backs to the flood-swollen Tennessee River and their front unprotected by entrenchments. After three days of chaotic and confused slaughter over territory thickly wooded, cut through with creeks, ravines, swamps, gullies, old fences, and dirt roads, the Union forces claimed a victory on the bitterly contested grounds of Shiloh Church. Although Lincoln thought the rumpled and field-worn Grant indispensable ("I can't spare this man; he fights"), General Halleck did not think him all that necessary, taking over the command of his army in person, bringing the war in the West to a halt after a successful but slow-motion assault on Corinth at the end of May. What Halleck might have garnered early in the summer of 1862 would be harvested later at great cost in the next years.

Throughout the past year the president had stood firm against a rising chorus of popular impatience, radical suspicions, and denunciations from the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. While the fortunes of McClellan rose and fell, the battle for the West degenerated into a series of fumbled opportunities, marches and counter marches, and spectacular cavalry raids. The southwestern theatre was an area of immense distances, mountain barriers, wide rivers, and rolling farm lands. An unfortunate decision by Halleck to disperse his forces along the various railroad lines bisecting this region had the effect of magnifying the advantages that the Confederates enjoyed in defending their home soil with mobile armies, superior cavalry, and guerrilla leaders. While the eastern campaigns confined the rival generals to the narrow space bordered by the rivers Potomac and James and the Valley of the Shenandoah, the western armies disputed a territory reaching from the Appalachians to the Mississippi (and beyond).

Ordered to repair the Memphis and Charleston Railroad in preparation for an assault on Chattanooga, Buell depended on supplies hauled over 300 miles by railroad, ferry, and wagon train. Halleck, who had been called to Washington in July as general-in-chief, complained in dismay at the ease with which Confederate cavalry chieftains Forrest and Morgan roamed over Tennessee and Kentucky. While Buell fended off cavalry and guerrilla raids and tried desperately to keep his far-flung communications intact, General Braxton Bragg, now leading the newly reorganized Army of Tennessee, outgeneraled the commander of the Federal troops, reaching Chattanooga

first in a brilliant logistical exercise, bringing troops from Mississippi by railroad and boat. Resolved at last to attack Chattanooga despite its reinforcement, the West Pointer was suddenly thrown on the defensive by a surprise attack on Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap and a simultaneous advance through the Sequatchie Valley threatening his own forward position at McMinnville. Conditioned by Halleck to expect great results in the West and depressed by the Union failures before Richmond, Lincoln became more and more impatient with the meticulous Buell.

In a brilliant series of simultaneous cavalry raids, Generals John H. Morgan and Nathan Bedford Forrest severed the overextended Union communication lines. The almost legendary Morgan struck all along the Louisville and Nashville Railroad in Kentucky, surprising detached units; wrecking railroads, engines, and rolling stock; destroying bridges and tunnels; intercepting military dispatches; and terrorizing whole towns during the weeks of July 4-28, 1862. With 2,000 cavalry Forrest pounced upon Murfreesboro, July 13, and captured almost an entire Federal brigade. In August another raid in the Nashville vicinity routed a large Union cavalry command shielding the city. Bushwhackers and partisan bands roamed the undefended countryside, attacking loyalists, Federal pickets, and bringing trade to a standstill. Meanwhile Buell, forced to leave Nashville under the protection of General George H. Thomas and 6,000 troops, frantically raced Bragg to Louisville to protect his major supply depot and southern Ohio. After an inconclusive but sanguinary engagement at Perryville, Buell allowed the Confederate

force to slip through Cumberland Gap unhindered while he returned to Nashville. Dissatisfaction with Buell finally resulted in his being replaced by William S. Rosecrans, who, on October 30, 1862, became commander of the Army of the Ohio.

The last day of 1862 saw another hard-fought engagement in the West. Rosecrans, now commanding the newly named Department of the Cumberland, fell upon Bragg's thinning ranks at Murfreesboro in the battle of Stones River, a contest so fierce that the well-bloodied Union army, claiming victory, did not march forth to do battle again for another six months. Eventually, the Army of the Cumberland lumbered forward, sweeping Bragg from Middle Tennessee in the Tullahoma campaign (June 24-30) and pushing the Confederate Army toward Chattanooga. Simultaneously, Ambrose Burnside moved southward from the Kentucky border and the upper Cumberland to menace Knoxville with the Army of the Ohio. When Simon Bolivar Buckner, lately of Fort Donelson and Perryville, was drawn from Knoxville to help Bragg defend the Chattanooga area, Burnside promptly occuped the upper East Tennessee town on September 2. Under pressure from Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland, Bragg abandoned Chattanooga on September 9, allowing the Union forces to take the town without a battle. Hoping to relieve the Army of Tennessee, Lee sent James Longstreet, the tardy commander of Gettysburg fame, and 11,000 troops to strengthen Bragg's wearied forces.

On September 19-20, Longstreet redeemed his reputation with a wild charge that almost swept the Union resistance from the field at Chickamauga, driving Rosecrans back to Chattanooga. The Army of

the Cumberland was saved from total disaster by the inadvertent "Rock of Chickamauga," George H. Thomas, and his troops, who, unaware of the debacle in other sectors, stood firm against superior numbers and permitted the regrouping of the scattered and demoralized Federals. Chickamauga was a slaughterhouse, comparable to bloody Antietam and tragic Gettysburg. The barren Confederate victory resulted in Rosecrans being trapped in Chattanooga where the Federals proceeded to starve on short rations. Ironically, however, the Confederate high command rescued the Army of the Cumberland from defeat by dividing Bragg's forces in a bold but foolhardy attempt to recapture Knoxville. Given the task of dislodging Burnside, who had recently fortified the town, Longstreet laid futile seige during the latter part of November. With a third of his army involved in the ill-advised Knoxville campaign, Bragg was attacked by Grant, who came to the aid of the Army of the Cumberland during three days of battle at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge (November 23-25). In a confused, disorderly display of valor (and impetuous improvisation that left one Federal commander threatening his troops with courtmartials for carrying the top of Missionary Ridge as well as the more heavily defended rifle pits at the bottom), U. S. Grant's army had delivered Chattanooga and the state to the Federals.

Tennessee was now virtually clear of all organized resistance except for occasional cavalry forays and guerrilla raids until Sherman's capture of Atlanta (September 2, 1864) debouched its final defender, the vainglorious John Bell Hood, recently named commander of the tattered Army of Tennessee, in a frantic attempt to

cut the Federal communications. George H. Thomas was sent to intercept the Confederates, leading to the battle of Franklin (November 30, 1864) which ended in a costly rebel defeat. Hood then laid seige to Nashville until Thomas, prodded by Grant, attacked the rebel positions in the climactic and decisive battle of Nashville (December 15-16), effectively destroying the Army of Tennessee and ending any other real Confederate threat to the state.

Throughout this period Andrew Johnson was a thorn in the side of the U. S. Army and the commanding generals responsible for military operations in the state. Concerned about East Tennessee, he agitated Washington for early relief of the section; sensitive to political implications of the army's role, he scorned Buell's alleged leniency; fearful that hard-won gains would be lost and Unionism extinguished, he demanded that Nashville be defended; suspicious of the motivations of post commanders, army police, and provost marshalls, he exercised more authority than comfortable to commanding officers, who were wary of ambitious and meddling politicians. Under these circumstances Buell and Johnson were inevitably bound to disagree, especially considering the general's deadly habit of ignoring the politics of war.

Having been disappointed in the early stages by the failure to secure East Tennessee for the Union and additionally exercised by Buell's preference for conciliation and lenity in his relationships with the rebel population, Johnson was further frustrated and disillusioned by the deliberate and cautious military strategy followed

by the commander of the Army of the Ohio. The problems began almost immediately.

The military government had been in place less than three weeks before Johnson discovered that Buell had left Nashville and environs "almost defenseless." A week away from Shiloh, the Army of the Ohio was moving slowly on the road leading to Pittsburg Landing and the town of Savannah, leaving the newly liberated capital defended by "a few Regiments left in detached positions without one single piece of artillery." Incensed by having been treated so by Buell, the angry governor complained directly to the secretary of war.[58] Stanton responded almost immediately, declaring that "immediate measures would be taken to correct the evil," indicating that the war department accepted Johnson's characterization of the situation.[59] Indeed, Nashville was in considerable danger due to the deployment of Federal forces. The larger portion of Buell's forces were marching toward Savannah at a time when the region around the capital was suddenly infested by guerrillas. At the same time a contemporary journalist commented on how few troops in their distinctive blue uniforms attended the governor's speech on March 22, when Johnson addressed the citizens. Although one might expect a newly captured city to be awash in blue

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[58] Johnson to Stanton, March 29, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 254.

[59] Ibid., 254n; Stanton to Johnson, March 30, 1862, Johnson Papers. Stanton immediately dispatched a message to General Halleck. "You can appreciate the consequence of any disaster at Nashville," he warned, urging the commander of the western armies to guard against such an eventuality and take appropriate steps. Stanton to Halleck, March 30, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, X, pt. 2, p. 79.

coats, "few soldiers were in the hall--very few are left in the city."[60] Meanwhile, rebel partisans were lurking on the outskirts and elsewhere, interrupting trade, seizing forage, harassing Federal pickets, and boldly intimidating loyalists.[61] "The idea was studiously inculcated that the Federal Army would shortly be driven out and the Confederate authority restored." With the rebels thus emboldened it remained to be "demonstrated beyond cavil that the government has power to put down the rebellion or even to ho[a]rd the advantages already gained."[62] Johnson, himself, denounced guerrilla depredations and even offered a reward for notorious partisan leaders.[63] In addition, he and others believed that prominent citizens had been assisting the rebel irregulars in their raids upon Union men and property. According to the Cincinnati Commercial, Johnson claimed that

> Guerrilla bands have been infesting the country north of us for some time past, and it has been suspected that numerous citizens of Sumner Co., under the lead of the Hon. Joseph C. Guild, have been aiding them in their depredations on the line of the Louisville and Nashville railroad.[64]

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[60] Louisville Journal, March 29, 1862.

[61] William B. Campbell and Jordan Stokes to Johnson, April 23, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 322-23. John S. Daniel, Jr., Special Warfare in Middle Tennessee and Surrounding Areas, 1861-62 (M.A. thesis, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1971), 141-59; Hall, Andrew Johnson, 50-51.

[62] Horace Maynard to Stanton, March 24, 1862, RG 107.

[63] See Speech to Davidson County Citizens, March 22, 1862, and Isaac T. Reneau to Johnson, March 31, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 237, 257-58.

[64] Cincinnati Commercial, March 29, 1862.

Indeed the governor had been in Nashville just three days when John Morgan's cavalry made his first raid on the line at Gallatin.[65] Under such threatening circumstances, the governor felt justified in complaining that Nashville was endangered. More importantly, as one historian noted, the guerrillas were "by far the greatest obstacle to Johnson's success in Tennessee."[66]

Open to attack from all sides and dependent on the uncertain Louisville and Nashville railroad for supplies and communication, the city lay like a rich and exposed jewel before the Confederate freebooters.[67] During this time the Union army in the Tennessee theatre was always short of cavalry. Buell complained constantly of the lack of mounted troops which were needed to provide information on the enemy's movements and to screen his own army from the harrying raids of Forrest, Morgan, and others. With the Federal forces responsible for an area from the Ohio River to the Tennessee-Mississippi state lines, Confederate raiders could move almost unmolested. In the middle of March, Morgan's cavalry held Columbia, just forty miles south of Nashville, and watched Buell's engineers build pontoon bridges

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[65] Nashville Union, April 16, 1862.

[66] Hall, Andrew Johnson, 51.

[67] The country around the city, according to one of John Morgan's contemporaries, was "the paradise of partisan cavalry, who can find in it, everywhere, supplies for men and horses, [and] shelter to hide them." Densely forested with great cedar groves and filled with numerous springs and creeks, the region provided natural cover for the rebel irregulars, who could strike quickly from ambush, certain of hospitable aid from the sympathetic farmers and country folk in the area. Basil W. Duke, History of Morgan's Cavalry (Cincinnati, 1867), 132.

across the Duck River, hoping to learn the destination of the Army of the Ohio.[68]

Rumors of hidden arms caches, secret conclaves, impending uprisings, sabotage, and other militant activity by rebel sympathizers kept the sparsely defended city in a state of seige mentality. During early April, Federal troops searched suspected secessionist homes in the Nashville suburban district of Edgefield, seizing weapons in some of them.[69] In mid-April, a saboteur derailed a train near the residence of John Overton, the prominent secessionist, provoking the angry passengers to seek lodging in the rebel's house and burn his barn in retaliation.[70] James T. Ball, a pro-secessionist and ex-member of the city council formerly associated with the suppressed Nashville Gazette, reportedly approached a man whose Union sympathies were unknown to him with some startling news. On a certain night the city bells would all ring at midnight, the rebels would rise against the loyalists, and the Union men would be "cleaned out."[71] Such rumor-mongering, coupled with guerrilla raids and Buell's request for every troop that the post commander could spare, contributed to Johnson's concerns about the fate of the city. Given the character of the later raids of Morgan and Forrest against Gallatin, Murfreesboro, and other towns in the surrounding area, Nashville could have easily

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[68]Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 149.

[69]Louisville Journal, April 11, 17, 1862.

[70]Nashville Union, April 15, 1862.

[71]Louisville Journal, April 17, 1862.

fallen during this period.[72] However, Buell remained confident that no real danger existed.

Johnson bitterly protested to Washington, first to Stanton and then to Lincoln. Stanton reminded General Halleck of the seriousness posed by the absence of adequate forces. "You can appreciate the consequence of any disaster at Nashville, and are requested to take immediate measures to secure it against all danger." Buell doubted that a rebel army of any "great force" might advance upon the state capital but conceded that "a dash with 15,000 men I think it proper to guard against."[73]

The governor's concerns were momentarily submerged by the devastating events on the grounds of Shiloh Church and Pittsburg Landing. As the bloodied ranks of both forces regrouped, additional troops were needed by Halleck's western armies, gathering for an advance on the Confederate concentration at Corinth. Hypersensitive to the fragile defense of Nashville and the political implications of a reverse, Johnson continued to complain. "I have this moment been advised that the 3d Minnesota Reg't stationed here & the

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[72] It seems that the only ingredient lacking to the Confederate raiders was manpower. John Morgan had only about three hundred men in the vicinity, but between the fall of Nashville and the battle of Shiloh, he raided the outskirts of Nashville, burning a steamboat in the process, captured dozens of Federal soldiers, destroyed rolling stock and the railroad depot at Gallatin, terrorized the army units patrolling the various turnpikes, and even took time to visit and court his fiancee, who lived just sixteen miles southeast of Nashville at LaVergne. Duke, History of Morgan's Cavalry, 121-37.

[73] Stanton to Halleck, March 30, 1862; Buell to Halleck, March 30, 1862, OR, Ser. I, X, pt. 2, p. 79.

forces at Murfreesboro & Lebanon have been ordered south by Buell," he said. "This is substantially surrendering the country to the rebels." He suggested that the general's mismanagement was well known in Washington.

> My understanding was that I was sent here to accomplish a certain purpose. If the means are withheld it is better to desist from any further efforts. You are well aware of Genl Buell's course in regard to Tennessee from the beginning to the present moment. . . . The effect of removing the troops is visible in the face of every secessionist. Secession was cooling down & great reaction in favor of the Union was taking place.[74]

General Halleck became exasperated with the governor's protestation. On the eve of his successful capture of Corinth, the western commander declared that troops could not be spared for the purpose of mollifying the Tennessee executive. "We are now at the enemy's throat, and cannot release our great grasp to pare his toe-nails."[75] With Buell insisting that the withdrawal of certain regiments only represented an attempt to defend Middle Tennessee from more advanced positions, Horace Maynard, who was transmitting messages between Johnson, Stanton, and Lincoln, assured the governor that both "were disposed to sustain you fully."[76]

Lincoln, however, recognized that military necessity had its imperatives. Buell was not solely responsible for the drain of troops.

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[74]Stanton to Halleck, April 25, 1862, ibid., 126; Johnson to Maynard, April 24, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 331.

[75]Halleck to Stanton, April 26, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, X, pt. 2, pp. 128-29.

[76]Buell to Johnson, April 24, 1862; Maynard to Johnson, April 25, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 330, 332.

Halleck, already convinced that the rebel army greatly outnumbered his forces due to supposed daily reinforcements, demanded more and more soldiers until the alleged numerical imbalance could be redressed. Like Buell, the western commander was a proponent of the McClellan school of careful drilling, meticulous planning, and cautious advances, preferring to out-maneuver the enemy rather than to give battle.[77] The president tried to calm the distraught governor, dismayed by the continued loss of troops from his sector. "Genl Halleck understands better than we can here & he must be allowed to control in that quarter."[78]

Although Buell had promised to replace the troops sent South and to maintain a defense of Nashville from a more advanced position, the Union advance upon Corinth prevented him from keeping his promises.[79] Incensed by the governor's constant strictures upon his actions and motives, Buell defended himself. "The disposition I have made of troops in Middle Tennessee," he assured Halleck, "is absolutely

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[77]Ambrose, Halleck, 49-52. Like Buell, Halleck tended to exaggerate the strength of the forces against him.

[78]Lincoln to Johnson, April 27, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 338. Ironically, Lincoln had echoed the governor's concerns in his own complaints to McClellan about the security of Washington. "After you left, I ascertained that less than twenty thousand unorganized men, without a single field battery, were all you designed to be left for the defence of Washington, and Manassas Junction." Frightened by the prospect of defending a line from Richmond to the capital with less than twenty thousand disorganized troops, Lincoln detained General Irvin McDowell and ordered him to remain in position around the city. See Lincoln to McClellan, April 9, 1862, Basler, Works of Lincoln, V, 184.

[79]See, for example, Buell to Johnson, April 24, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 330.

necessary for its defense." Moreover, "I consider this a matter of far greater moment that the gratification of Governor Johnson, whose views upon the matter are absurd."[80]

In reality Johnson's fears were justifiable. With guerrillas roaming the suburbs, some organized defense of the city was needed for both political and military purposes. Nonetheless, the drain on Nashville's garrison continued throughout the spring. By mid-June, the post commander reported that except for the provost guard and the unorganized Governor's Guard (First Tennessee Regiment) there were no troops at all left in Nashville.[81]

Expecting a major battle to decide the fate of Corinth, the Federal command was completely outwitted by the resourceful Beauregard, who removed his troops by rail and left the town defended only by "Quaker" batteries and deprecating graffiti.[82] Thoroughly deceived by the stealthy withdrawal, Halleck declined to mount a pursuit, thereby permitting the Confederates to remove an entire field army unmolested. Northern newspapers and radical politicians condemned the barren victory. However, Halleck was pleased with the results, regarding Corinth as one of the most strategic positions in the West.

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[80] Buell to Halleck, April 26, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, X, pt. 2, p. 129.

[81] Although there were a few regiments and scattered companies at Murfreesboro, Columbia, and Franklin, Colonel Stanley Matthews reported that "I have not men enough to do ordinary guard duty." Matthews to James F. Fry, ibid., XVI, pt. 2, p. 23.

[82] The occupying Union forces found that mocking rebel troops had written "These premises to let; inquire of G. T. Beauregard" on the walls of empty buildings. Ambrose, Halleck, 52-53.

Thereafter the Federal army resorted to a tentative, desultory, often defensive campaign that would further embroil the cautious Buell in a continuing conflict with the governor of Tennessee.[83]

With spring rolling into summer, Halleck's massive western army ponderously turned East. It now numbered more than 100,000 against an effective Confederate force of perhaps 45,000 troops under GeneralBraxton Bragg, who replaced the out-of-favor Beauregard (the latter had been removed for failing to keep Richmond informed about his military operations, particularly the reasons for abandoning Corinth without a battle).[84] Halleck resolved to remain on the defensive in that portion of northern Mississippi and southern Tennessee occupied by his army. From his headquarters in Corinth, he could direct the repair of railroads and the construction of fortifications. Buell would begin the long awaited offensive to reclaim East Tennessee.[85]

Thereafter, Buell initiated a long drawn-out demonstration against Chattanooga, an operation that would consume most of the summer despite the president's anxious requests for action and Johnson's concern for the relief of East Tennessee. Ordered by Halleck to repair the Memphis and Charleston railroad from Corinth to Chattanooga,

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[83]Williams, Lincoln Finds a General, III, 415-22; Ambrose, Halleck, 50-56; Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 177.

[84]Ibid., 177-91.

[85]Ambrose, Halleck, 56.

the Ohio general began moving East. "One of the great myths of the war is that Buell's move on Chattanooga failed because Halleck required him to rebuild the Memphis and Charleston railroad as he advanced," an historian has observed. Rather he showed that those elements of the army unencumbered by construction moved eastward almost as slowly as the units assigned to the repair of the roadbeds, track, and bridges. Moreover, the road was repaired by mid-June, leaving plenty of time to mount an offensive against East Tennessee.[86] Despite the president's constant reiteration of his interest in the Chattanooga expedition ("I think fully as important as the taking and holding of Richmond"), Buell delayed, complaining of logistical and supply problems.[87]

While the commander of the Army of the Ohio wrestled with the problem of a 300-mile-long supply line, pondered intelligence reports, and fended off complaints from Johnson and anxious inquiries from Lincoln, units commanded by two of his subordinate commanders reached the outskirts of Chattanooga and even shelled the city.[88] The attack produced very little except premature jubilation in Union ranks and renewed disgust on the part of Andrew Johnson.[89] The

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[86]Williams, Lincoln Finds a General, IV, 29.

[87]Lincoln to Halleck, June 18, 30, 1862, Basler, Works of Lincoln, V, 276, 295; Chumney, Buell, 107-9.

[88]Louisville Journal, June 14, 16, 1862; Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 190-91.

[89]Brigadier General James S. Negley reported that the Union people responded joyously. "They met us along the roads by hundreds." Negley to Johnson, June 12, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 472.

governor complained immediately to Halleck, urging that he be sustained in his requests.

> The demonstrations which have been made upon lower East Tennessee, causing the people to manifest their Union feeling & sentiments and then to be abandoned, have been crushing and ruinous to thousands. I trust in God that when another advance is made upon that section of the State, our position may be maintained, at least until arms can be placed in the hands of the people to defend themselves against their relentless oppressors.[90]

With the premature foray against Chattanooga and subsequent withdrawal, the governor added another grievance to the accumulating list being recorded against the hopeless Buell. Already dismayed over the general's initial failure to take East Tennessee in the winter of 1861-62, Johnson was further angered by Buell's lenient treatment of rebels, his leaving Nashville isolated and underdefended, and his inexplicably tardy approach to Chattanooga and lower East Tennessee. Although the Tennessean was probably more concerned about the political implications of securing that portion of his state, the strategic value of Chattanooga and the surrounding region was enormous.

Nestled on the eastern slope of the Cumberland Mountains, the city represented an important transportation and staging area for the Confederacy. The Tennessee River and its tributaries and the vital Chattanooga railhead made the city vital for the transfer of munitions, supplies, and troops between Virginia and the rest of the rebel nation. The loss of the city would cut the precious rail artery

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[90]Johnson to Halleck, June 17, 1862, ibid., 486.

to Virginia and expose Atlanta, the most important railroad center in the South. In addition, four of the Confederacy's eight arsenals, Atlanta, Augusta, Macon, and Columbus; irreplaceable quartermaster supplies, artillery, and other ordnance items stored at Dalton, and rich coal, copper, and saltpetre deposits in northern Georgia and eastern Tennessee, would all be lost if Chattanooga fell.[91] It was such a prize that Buell let slip through his fingers that fateful summer of 1862. Not only did the Army of the Ohio fail to reach Chattanooga but its slow progress made its own supply lines highly vulnerable to cavalry raids and guerrilla attacks. They came with great suddenness.

On July 13, the Second Cavalry Brigade, C.S.A., under Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest overwhelmed the federal garrison at Murfreesboro, destroying military stores and the railroad depot while capturing nearly 1,200 prisoners.[92] About the same time, John Morgan's raiders invaded Kentucky, seeking to disrupt Buell's communications and to gather recruits for the Confederate army.[93] Frightened Union Unionists, including William B. Campbell, Jordan Stokes, and "other distinguished citizens" decamped to Louisville, ostensibly to confer upon "some mode of mutual defense against rebel raids and guerrilla

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[91]Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 190-91; Memorandum of Benjamin Tatham, January 31, 1863, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

[92]Report of Major General John P. McCown, July 17, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 1, p. 809.

[93]Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 194-96.

robberies."[94] A secessionist lady reported that "When Gov. J. heard of Gov. C's hasty exit, he became furious, and remarked, 'Gov. C has just applied for a Brigadiership, at his solicitation I backed him, now at the first approach of danger he deserts his post.'"[95] Some southern ladies supposedly kept their lights burning all night, breathlessly awaiting the arrival of their friends and deliverers.[96] "There is comparatively no force at this place at this time," a distraught Johnson telegraphed Halleck, promising that "in the event the attack is made we will give them as warm a reception as we know how."[97] With Governor Isham G. Harris and other rebel notables "taking the waters" at Beersheba Springs near Sparta, in confident expectation that the capital would fall and Harris would be restored to the executive chair, Johnson threatened to raze the city to prevent its capture.[98] Speaking to a group of citizens rallying to defend the embattled capital, the governor condemned the fair weather patriots

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[94]Louisville Journal, July 17, 1862.

[95]Elizabeth Harding to William G. Harding, July 17, 1862, Harding Papers.

[96]Philadelphia Press, July 19, 1862.

[97]Johnson to Halleck, July 13, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 557.

[98]Louisville Journal, July 16, 1862; War Journal of L. Virginia (Smith) French, 1860, 1862-65 (typescript, Tennessee State Library and Archives), 56; Maggie Harding to William G. Harding, July 22, 1862, Harding Papers.

who fled the city and melodramatically declaimed "let us fall, if need be, amid its crumbling and smoking ruins."[99]

Although the rebel horsemen would not enter a blasted city in triumphant procession, they surely succeeded in interrupting Buell's supply lines for two more weeks, until July 28, when the bridges destroyed in the Murfreesboro raid were rebuilt. Buell simply could not mount an offensive against Chattanooga and protect his communications lines at the same time. On August 12, John Morgan attacked Gallatin, ripped up the railroad tracks on both sides of the town, destroyed the trestle bridges, and blocked the 800-foot tunnel just a few miles north. Consequently, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad was rendered useless for several months at that depot, necessitating time-consuming unloading and hauling of supplies past the break.[100] Ironically, the very policy that Johnson condemned, removing most of the troops from Nashville and Middle Tennessee, came back to haunt Buell. Partisan bands and regular cavalry moved with ease in the Nashville area and the neighboring counties that summer. Their raids constantly harassed foragers and pickets, posing daily threats for quartermasters, depot and bridge guards, and army engineers. Under these conditions, the Army of the Ohio could not take Chattanooga. "We are moving briskly to counteract all movements," Buell explained, "but our lines are long, our railroads broken, the weather killing to

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[99]Speech at Nashville, July 14, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 559.

[100]Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 202.

men marching, and our supplies limited and now uncertain."[101] The general had been hoisted by his own petard![102]

By mid-August, Buell was checkmated in the East Tennessee campaign by two factors. The first was the extremely successful sorties of Forrest and Morgan against his lines of communication. Secondly, his tardy progress toward Chattanooga allowed Braxton Bragg to transport his army from Mississippi via rail, wagon, and boat to the city ahead of him. With an almost herculean effort the Confederate general moved almost 35,000 troops across four states from his base in Tupelo, Mississippi, to Chattanooga, a distance of 800 miles in just a matter of days, some units in less than a week. Once Buell would have confronted an undermanned garrison of "the most ill-armed and ill-trained" troops in that department. Now he faced a highly motivated, strongly reinforced and well disciplined army.[103]

With Morgan destroying every bridge to within eight miles of Nashville, the Cumberland reduced to little more than a muddy creek,

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[101] Statement of Major General Don Carlos Buell, Review of the Evidence Before the Military Commission, Louisville Journal, June 22, 1863; Buell to Halleck, July 14, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 143.

[102] One critic took the whole western army command to task, observing that since Corinth, Halleck's great army, larger than Napoleon's most magnificent corps, had failed to take the offensive and had been humiliated by the successful guerrillas. "But this acting purely on the defensive--using the spade instead of the carbine and the saber, demoralizes our own troops and emboldens the enemy." New York Tribune, August 4, 1862.

[103] Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 196-204. See also some captured letters, describing the operation, New York Tribune, August 15, 1862.

and the Gallatin tunnel blocked, Buell was forced on the defensive.[104] As his supplies dwindled, he also received orders to subsist on the country, contradicting his own view that mild benevolent policies would persuade southerners to abandon the Confederacy.[105] In Nashville an angry and frustrated Johnson watched the Army of the Ohio recede from its forward positions. With the Cumberland puddling into a muddy, meandering, unnavigable stream, the troops guarding the city were reduced to half rations.[106] The relief of East Tennessee was to be delayed once more. Johnson was furious. He wrote Major General Thomas, who he hoped would eventually lead the rescue column:

> The redemption of East Tennessee seems almost to be as remote as it was when I was with you at Camp Dick Robinson. I have almost despaired of that people ever being releived [sic] from their oppression, unless the policy that has been pursued is abandoned at once. There must be more vigor & the enemy made to bear the expense and feel the pressure of war. Leniency is construed into timidity, compromising to concession, which inspires them with confidence & keeps alive the fell [sic] spirit of rebellion.[107]

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[104] Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, IV, 46.

[105] Halleck to Buell, August 8, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 286.

[106] Louisville Journal, August 26, 1862.

[107] Johnson to George H. Thomas, August 16, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 617. Thomas, however, defended his commander and obliquely indicted Johnson in his reply. Disavowing any wish to command the East Tennessee expedition, the general retorted that "it is utterly Impossible for the most able General in the world to conduct a campaign with success when his hands are tied as it were by the constant apprehension that his plans may be interfered with at any moment either by higher authority . . . or through the influence of others who may have other plans." Thomas to Johnson, August 16, 1862, ibid., 618.

Thereafter Buell's days were numbered. Pleading that the need to maintain and defend his long supply lines had reduced his available troops, he asserted that "This force is not only very much less than that which is now crossing the mountains under Bragg, but labors under all the difficulty and peril of operating virtually in an enemy's country surrounded with an immense amount of irregular cavalry." If Buell's 25,000 or 30,000 men could not be subsisted in that portion of Tennessee without a 300 or 400-mile-long supply line, then the governor must have wondered at Buell's contention that he was threatened by an army of at least 50,000 troops. "All the information I got represents it much greater," the West Pointer explained, adding dramatically, "It probably is between 50,000 and 60,000."[108] Consequently, in view of his supply problems and signs that Bragg intended an offensive, the commander of the Army of the Ohio proposed to fall back to Nashville and Middle Tennessee to regroup and seek reinforcements. If the territory between Nashville and Chattanooga could not subsist Buell's troops, how could it support the supposedly larger army of Confederate troops under Bragg? Such a question must have occurred to Johnson and other observers. At any rate the governor rejected Buell's highly inflated figures. "Fifty thousand troops can't be supplied or subsisted between McMinnville

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[108]Buell to Lovell H. Rousseau [and Johnson], August 30, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 451. Buell overestimated Bragg's strength by nearly 50 percent. The Confederate general reported on August 27 that he had 27,320 men present for duty. Buell's own spy placed the rebel infantry at between 22,000 and 24,000. Even his officers, testifying in his defense, gave estimates far short of those of the general. See ibid., pt. 1, pp. 14-15; pt. 2, pp. 470-71, 789.

and Chattanooga or any other place from which they have marched," the provisional governor responded, declaring that the rebel army probably contained fewer than 25,000 troops, perhaps less than half that number.[109]

On August 19, 1862, General Kirby Smith had invaded Kentucky with 18,000 men, menacing Ohio and threatening to separate Buell from his main supply base at Louisville. With Bragg's army hidden from him in the mountains of East Tennessee, Buell was forced to fall back toward Nashville.[110] When he finally located the Confederate army it was at Sparta, sixty miles northeast of his own headquarters at Murfreesboro, poised to join Kirby Smith in Kentucky.[111]

By the time Buell reached Middle Tennessee, his army was at least 45,000, due to reinforcements from Grant and elsewhere. With Nashville filling with refugees and buzzing with rumors of impending danger, observers could only wonder why Buell did not launch an attack on the Confederate army at Sparta before the rebel column crossed the Cumberland and joined Kirby Smith. Even his loyal defender

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[109]Johnson to Buell, August 31, 1862, ibid., XVI, pt. 2, p. 461.

[110]Johnson and other Unionists would not easily forget the consequence of this reverse on the Union families suddenly confronted with the prospect of losing the protection of the Federal army. A U. S. officer described the suffering that he witnessed among Union families. "I have seen thousands of men, wemen [sic] and little children, traveling along in the dust and hot sun, following the Army, their houses having been burned, thier [sic] property taken away from them, many of thier [sic] relatives hung or shot." Hans Christian Heg to Gunild Heg, September 11, 1862, Theodore C. Blegen, ed., The Civil War Letters of Colonel Hans Christian Heg (Northfield, Minn., 1936), 137.

[111]Chumney, Buell, 119-23.

and subordinate General George H. Thomas conceded that "I desired to concentrate the army and meet Bragg at Sparta and fight him, because I thought we had supplies enough to enable us to do it."[112] Thus another opportunity passed through Buell's fingers as he allowed an enemy numerically inferior and often over a hundred miles from his base of supply to seize the initiative from him.

Many radicals and northern papers began condemning the general openly, probably expressing all the anger and frustration that Johnson and other Buell critics must have felt. One mid-western editor summed up the situation, scorning the West Pointer and calling for his immediate replacement.

> The salvation of the West depends upon the removal of so inefficient a general. The army despises him, and well they may. From the beginning he has been a laggard, and the longer he has retained his command the more useless he has become. He never meant to fight Bragg. He had plenty of opportunities to cut him all to pieces, and scouted every suggestion to use them.[113]

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[112] New York Herald, April 24, 1865; Testimony of Major General George B. Thomas, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 1, pp. 201-2. Nashville Union September 5, 9, 1862. Later, Buell argued that an attack on Sparta was not feasible unless one "must suppose that the enemy would wait seven or eight days in that place to be attacked, which he did not do." Had such a plan to move against Bragg at Sparta been presented, "I should have rejected it." However, he clearly wished his commanders to believe that he might attack the rebel forces once the receding Army of the Ohio reached Murfreesboro. "Once concentrated," the general suggested, leaving himself an escape clause at both ends of the sentence, "we may move against the enemy wherever he puts himself if we are strong enough." Buell Statement, Louisville Journal, June 23, 1863; Buell to Thomas, August 28, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 439; Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, IV, 50.

[113] Indianapolis Journal, October 1, 1862. Buell, however, was not without his defenders in the Fourth Estate. The Louisville Journal deplored "the blind and childish outcry for the removal of General Buell," hopeful that the administration would not yield to "the popular

Having already been angered by Buell's surrender of the territory south of Nashville which placed the Union's friends in great jeopardy, Johnson complained to Lincoln "It seems to me that Gen. Buell fears his own personal safety," the governor accused, bitterly, "and has concluded to gather the whole army at this point as a kind of body-guard to protect and defend him, without reference to the Union men who have been induced to speak out, believing that the Government would defend them." Furthermore, "Gen. Buell is very popular with the Rebels, and the impression is that he is more partial to them than to Union men, and that he favors the establishment of a Southern Confederacy." Having thereby maligned the general's loyalty, the Tennessean denied entertaining any such feelings himself, but asserted that Buell's policy, in effect, promoted the cause of the Confederacy and the loss of Tennessee to the rebels. He concluded with the prayer that had become a litany, pleading "May God save my country from some of the generals that have been conducting this war."[114]

After months of barren campaigning and tedious camp life, Buell turned his much marched Army of the Ohio northward to Kentucky, leaving Major General Thomas temporarily in command of Nashville.

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clamor" demanding that the Ohioan be cashiered. Scolding its Indianapolis namesake for its editorial campaign against the commander of the Army of the Ohio, the Journal continued to praise Buell, confident in "the brilliant success of his plans to circumvent the traitors." Louisville Journal, October 1, 3, 1862.

[114]Johnson to Lincoln, September 1, 1862, New York Tribune, November 18, 1862. This letter did not reach Lincoln immediately due to Morgan's interruption of communications between Nashville and Washington.

Bragg was already on the prowl. Emboldened by John Morgan's dispatches that Kentucky thirsted for the rebels and aiming to sever the Federal Army's supply lines, he had sent his army across the Cumberland into the grassy hills of Kentucky.[115] Having already threatened to destroy the city rather than surrender it, the Tennessee governor entreated Buell to leave Thomas in command of the defenses. "There is the utmost confidence in his bravery and capacity to defend Nashville against any odds," he explained. Observing that portions of the Confederate army remained in the vicinity, Johnson contended that further reduction of troops would provoke a rebel assault on the capital.[116]

The defense of Nashville became a source of controversy. Although Buell would later deny that he ever considered leaving Nashville undefended, the evidence to the contrary was compelling to the commission investigating his operations in Tennessee and Kentucky. Johnson himself told the commission that rumors were prevalent both inside the city and among the secessionists outside that the army would evacuate completely. On September 6, Samuel R. Glenn, a New York Herald correspondent with close ties to the governor's office, reported "a state of great consternation" in the city over the evacuation rumors. In his deposition before the Buell commission, Johnson recalled urging "the great importance of holding

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[115] McKinney, Education in Violence, 144-45.

[116] Johnson to Buell, September 14, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 516.

Nashville at all hazards, and in the end, rather than it should be retaken and held by the enemy, that it should be destroyed." Buell, however, remained committed to his own policy. "The holding of Nashville in a military point of view was of no great importance," the West Pointer insisted, according to Johnson, "that in fact upon military principles Nashville should have been abandoned or evacuated three months ago." Finally, Buell consented in a third conversation with the governor to leave Major General George H. Thomas and his division behind. Thomas' timely arrival with his troops apparently gave weight to the governor's plea, according to the Glenn account. "He sustains Governor Johnson, and Nashville is neither evacuated or destroyed." In his defense Buell asserted that "I never intimated to Governor Johnson any intention or wish to leave Nashville without a garrison," denying that any such discussion took place on the subject. "On account of his official position I called upon him first to inform him what I meant to do, and last to tell him what garrison I had concluded to leave." Indeed, Buell declared that he, believing "always that the political importance of the occupation far outweighed any purely military bearing of the question," had said as much to his own officers.[117] However, the commission of inquiry flatly

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[117] New York Herald, April 24, 1865; Deposition of Hon. Andrew Johnson, Military Governor of Tennessee, April 22, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 1, pp. 687-98. Long before Johnson's deposition was presented to the committee, Parson Brownlow repeated the substance of the alleged Johnson-Buell interview for newspaper readers. "In an angry and excited conversation between Governor Johnson and General Buell, the latter told the former that Nashville ought to have been surrendered three months ago." Brownlow to the Editor, December 3, 1862, Philadelphia Press, December 5, 1862; Buell Statement, Louisville Journal, June 24, 1864.

rejected this contention, charging that "he became alarmed evidently at the attitude of Governor Johnson," and, by way of defense, "said subsequently to Generals Thomas and McCook that Nashville must be held at all hazard." Thus the commission accepted Johnson's side of the controversy.[118]

There are other indications, however, that Johnson's version may have been the correct one. The Adams Express Company removed its valuables to Louisville on September 4, after its special agent learned that "the authorities were discussing the question of evacuating the city." Moreover, he reported that "Governor Johnson insisted on destroying the city, while General Buell claimed to be in command, and declared that it should be left as he found it."[119] In addition, Glenn, the New York Herald reporter, reported that a genuine difference of opinion did exist between the governor and the general over holding Nashville.[120] That such a conflict of opinion was public knowledge is further indicated by an editorial in the Nashville Union praising the governor for his insistence on defending the city. In upholding Johnson's position, it was necessary to condemn Buell. "It will be seen how terribly disastrous to the Federal cause would have been the evacuation of Nashville," the editor observed, "which was urged with such obstinacy by General BUELL, and resisted with

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[118]See Opinion of the Commission, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 1, p. 17.

[119]See Alfred Gaither to A. Stager, September 8, 1862, ibid., pt. 2, p. 490.

[120]New York Herald, April 24, 1865.

greater obstinacy, and fortunately with success by Governor JOHNSON."[121] More importantly, the editorial, airing the differences between the two men, prompted Major William H. Sidell, U. S. Fifteenth Infantry, to complain at such unrestrained publications. "I think the article objectionable on this point, even if there be no misrepresentation of fact, for the reason that it informs the enemy of divided councils--and for the further reason that publications of this nature tend to check free conference." Most obviously, Sidell did not otherwise dispute the basic thesis of the editorial, namely, that only Johnson's impassioned remonstrances persuaded Buell to hold Nashville.[122] Another newspaper friendly to Johnson, the Washington Chronicle, insisted that Buell advocated the evacuation of Nashville as a military necessity.

> The Governor remonstrated with him kindly. The General persisted. Governor Johnson became vehement, and informed General Buell that he (the Governor) should remain in Nashville with his Middle Tennessee troops if every other soldier left. Thus Nashville was saved.[123]

Indeed the evidence, albeit circumstantial, seems to indict the general.[124] One wonders also whether Buell would have demonstrated

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[121]Nashville Union, October 24, 1862.

[122]William H. Sidell to Johnson, October 24, 1862, Johnson Papers.

[123]Washington Chronicle, November 19, 1862. See also Forney's other paper, the Philadelphia Press, October 23, 1862, for a similar story.

[124]That the holding of Nashville was an afterthought is also suggested by the disorganization of the troops and the poorly planned defenses that faced the post commander when he assumed responsibility in the wake of Buell's dash into Kentucky. "Assuming command on the

the same awareness of the importance of holding Nashville had the provisional governor been a person less forceful and outspoken than Andrew Johnson.

With martial law being declared in portions of Ohio and Kentucky due to the Confederate invasion of the bluegrass country, Lee's army rolled into Maryland. On the sea the British-built Confederate cruiser Alabama, having slipped out of the Liverpool harbor and into a storm of controversy and international tension, quickly began taking Union prizes on the high seas. In the chancellories of Europe, diplomats awaited news of one last great Federal defeat before offering mediation and de facto recognition of the Confederacy.[125]

Meanwhile, Don Carlos Buell had lost control of events. His own soldiers and commanders were now often openly critical of his operations and some even insubordinate. Rumors began flying that he was to be replaced. "Don Carlos won't do," one commander confided.[126] A midwestern editor agreed: "The loyal West cannot afford to have its sons longer put to the base uses to which he has

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6th of September, with two small divisions as a garrison, General Negley found himself shut up with but five days' provisions in a city weakly fortified and strongly menaced." At one point Negley was forced to form a regiment from convalescents left by Buell. Fitch, Army of the Cumberland, 102.

[125]Nevins, War for the Union, II, 265-83; Frank L. Owsley [and Harriet Chappell Owsley], King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America (Chicago, 1959 [1936]), 295-336.

[126]McKinney, Education in Violence, 154-55; Testimony of General James B. Steedman, OR, Ser. I, XVI, pt. 1, pp. 133-34.

subjected them, nor to keep them idle in little squads to be captured and destroyed in detail, by guerrilla bands."[127]

The Kentucky campaign would prove costly, indecisive, but destructive to the military careers of both Bragg and Buell. After the reverses earlier in 1862, the Confederacy badly needed a victory in the West. The initial movements of Morgan, Kirby Smith, and Bragg seemed fecund with promise. In an elegant fragment, the magisterial historian Allan Nevins captured the epic sweep of the setting and the fateful character of the contest:

> Thus began one of the most picturesque campaigns of the war. It had pictorial beauty in its theatre, the Kentucky country of bluegrass, rhododendron, and laurel, of deep narrow rivers, limestone caves, and hazy peaks. Some of its leaders were impressive figures, like the blithe Kirby-Smith, a large-spirited man who delighted in books, war, and hunting, and the fearless, swaggering Forrest. The campaign was above all picturesque in its crisscross of movements, and its plunge on both sides from high aims to impotent endings.[128]

On the morning of September 7, Forrest reported the Federals rapidly evacuating Nashville, prompting Bragg to cross the Cumberland River and march his 27,000 troops to Glasgow, Kentucky, which the Army of Tennessee reached on September 14. With Buell so close, Bragg decided against joining Kirby Smith for an attack on Cincinnati. Instead he proposed a joint assault on Louisville, Buell's major supply depot, but consumed two precious days in besieging and capturing a Yankee garrison and Munfordville. Bragg then spent still another

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[127] Chicago Tribune, August 30, 1862.

[128] Nevins, War for the Union, II, 279.

day in giving his army a time of thanksgiving and prayer to celebrate the victory. By this time Buell was moving toward Louisville. Fearing that he might be trapped between Buell and the Louisville garrison (which was composed of raw but rapidly augmenting levies), the commander of the Army of Tennessee, knowing that he had only three days' meager rations, allowed himself to be diverted, went on the defensive, and swung his columns toward Bardstown, his supply depot.[129]

On October 8 and 9, 1862, the dramatic Kentucky campaign climaxed in the desultory battle of Perryville. On the eve of the engagement, Bragg was at Frankfort, the capital, participating in the superfluous inauguration of Richard Hawes as provisional governor of the state. The approach of Federal troops rudely curtailed the ceremonies, prompting the eventual exit of Hawes from the state. Beginning over a disputed stream of fresh water desired by thirsty Federal troops, the bloody encounter at Perryville ended in the mutual discredit of both Bragg and Buell.[130] Later, the commission investigating Buell's actions would coldly charge extraordinary mismanagement of the battle which allowed "a golden opportunity to annihilate the rebel army" to go untaken. Moreover, having failed to direct his troops in such a manner as to deliver the coup de grace on the battle field, the commander then permitted the rebel army to retire from the area unmolested. The commission wondered why "a

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[129]Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, IV, 107-40.

[130]Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 243-66; Nevins, War for the Union, II, 286-87; McKinney, Education in Violence, 159-60.

road is always open to the rebels, who need no transportation and are not dependent upon the ordinary laws of subsistence; while to us there seems to be but one road, and that is through disaster to our base."[131]

Neither side could claim a clear advantage, although the Army of Tennessee was forced to abandon Kentucky and its ultimate hope to invade Ohio. The Confederates claimed a victory due to a vicious assault that netted them two bloody miles of battlefield and ten or twelve cannons. However, if Buell was criticized for his failures in the engagement, southerners were outraged by Bragg's entry into the battle against the superior Federal numbers without first combining his forces with Kirby Smith's.[132]

The Union reaction to the escape of the southern army was bitter. Various northern governors joined Tennessee's Andrew Johnson in demanding the removal of Buell (who just prior to the Perryville episode had been temporarily relieved from command and then restored upon General Thomas' remonstrance).[133] Even before learning of the Perryville battle, Johnson had sent a verbal message to Lincoln, by special courier and telegraph, urging replacement of the commander and

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[131]Opinion of the Commission, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 1, pp. 19-20.

[132]Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 243-80; Nevins, War for the Union, II, 286-87.

[133]Philadelphia Press, October 29, 1862; Washington Chronicle, November 19, 1862; McKinney, Education in Violence, 152-53, 168.

the assignment of more troops.[134] With the Confederate army returning to Tennessee, Nashville once more was in danger. On November 5, Forrest sent his brigade of Tennessee and Alabama troops against the fortified city in a demonstration to test post commander Brigadier General James S. Negley's positions. At the same time Morgan raided Edgefield.[135]

In an effort to protect his Nashville flanks, Buell swung his columns to pursue the Army of Tennessee in defiance of the President's wishes that he invade East Tennessee and sever the rebel communications there. On October 30, 1862, Major General William S. Rosecrans relieved the discredited Buell and took command of the newly renamed

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[134]Jeremiah T. Boyle to Johnson, October 14, 1862, Johnson Papers. However, John Morgan's own organ, The Vidette, praised Buell's generalship:

> That an army, composed in great part of raw recruits, and deprived in a great measure of transportation, now the more necessary since the almost complete destruction of both lines of railroad from Bowling Green to Nashville, of the camp equipage and the abundant supplies, without which it seems impossible for a Yankee army to exist, can be subsisted and equipped except by so consumate a commissary and quartermaster as Buell has proved himself to be, is a matter of doubt.

The Springfield (Tennessee) Vidette, November 2, 1862, quoted by the Cincinnati Times and copied by the Washington Chronicle, November 19, 1862.

[135]The Confederate assault on Nashville was observed by Johnson and his staff from the cupola of the capitol. At one point some of the Federal troops seemed to falter and then retreat before the rebel onslaught. Upon witnessing the reverse (which turned out later to be only a ruse to draw the Confederates into artillery range), the governor asserted, "I am no military man, but any one who talks of surrendering, I will shoot." New York Herald, April 24, 1865.

Army of the Cumberland.[136] Union hopes reached the nadir. A Nashville observer described the travail:

> The larger portion of Gen. Buell's army moves to Kentucky, and the guerrillas take possession of the entire boundary of Nashville. Protected by these ruffians, such bad men as Andy Ewing and Isham G. Harris circulate within gunshot of the penitentiary, and force all the young men into the rebel army, the former seducing and provoking the "patriotism" of the men able to bear arms, while Harris follows up his missions with his odious conscription papers. The leading rebels who fled in confusion from the State return and aid the rebel cause. The Union men feel a lack of confidence in the Government, and the whole State seems lost. And the State would have been lost but for the firmness and patriotism of Governor Johnson.[137]

From the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson until Longstreet's failed seige of Knoxville in late 1863, the central ingredient in Tennessee history during this epochal period would be the role of the contending armies.[138] The fate of Johnson's restoration program necessarily depended on the success of Federal arms. With Buell gone, Unionists turned expectantly to Rosecrans. William B. Campbell hoped that with the change in command "we shall have a more vigorous & successful prosecution of the war."[139] A weary and frustrated Johnson would concur.

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[136]By General Orders No. 168, October 24, 1862, all the state of Tennessee, East of Tennessee River was designated the Department of the Cumberland. Fitch, Army of the Cumberland, 367.

[137]Washington Chronicle, November 9, 1862.

[138]Hall, Andrew Johnson, 110.

[139]Campbell to Johnson, November 2, 1862, Johnson Papers.

Communications were restored in mid-November between Nashville and the North. When reinforcements arrived at the beleaguered capital, a relieved governor made a welcoming speech to the troops. He declared that "the Western campaign was now all right, and the rebels were driven down and down on [sic] on confines of hell."[140] With the arrival of the troops at the fortified capital, many prominent Union refugees returned in the van of the Federal column. A large crowd serenaded the new arrivals, among them Parson Brownlow and Horace Maynard, who responded immediately with militant and stirring speeches.[141]

The governor continued to tidy up the military arrangements relative to the post command. During the Kentucky campaign, Buell had called General Thomas from Nashville to assist in the operations against Bragg, leaving the former post commander of Columbia, Brigadier James S. Negley, in charge of the defenses. In the course of dealing with the new post commander, Johnson sent him copies of his own commission and other instructions concerning his appointment to advise him of the power and authority vested in the provisional governor and "to avoid any conflict that might arise from a misunderstanding."[142] Despite this effort, misunderstandings were soon to arise. Apparently, General Negley proceeded to meddle in "the civil business," gather the prerogatives of administering the pass

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[140] Richmond Dispatch, November 15, 1862, quoted in the Washington Chronicle, November 21, 1862.

[141] Ibid., November 22, 1862.

[142] Johnson to James S. Negley, October 20, 1862, Johnson Papers.

system to his own office, interfere in the operations of the city court, and otherwise contribute to the "unpleasant, complicated state of things" that had characterized the operations of the post command for the past six months. In effect he had forgotten that "there is a Military Governor in this State."[143] Johnson, however, complained to Lincoln. "Since my location here we have had numerous Commanders placed at this post," he recounted to the president, "some of them have been tolerable[,] others intolerable." However, "the one now in command Gen. Negley who was left here by Gen. Buell," the governor explained, "has done us more harm than all others & is wholly unfitted for the place."[144] Negley, who had been highly praised for his stout defense of Nashville during the recent weeks and earlier had earned a reputation for dealing harshly with the rebels, was soon given a field assignment and a new post commander was appointed to Nashville.[145]

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[143]Louisville Journal, November 12, 1862; Philadelphia Press, October 23, December 18, 1862. See also Alvan C. Gillem to [William] Shane, November 7, 1862; Shane to Gillem, November 7, 1862 [and Gillem's endorsement], Johnson Papers.

[144]Johnson to Lincoln, November 8, 1862, RG 107. The formidable editor of the Washington Chronicle, John Forney, sided with Johnson, declaring that "Negley is a 'd--d fool'" and urged the president to give the governor "full control of everything." Benjamin C. Truman to Johnson, November 17, 1862, Johnson Papers.

[145]Later cited for distinguished service at the battle of Stones River, Negley, ironically, would be charged with cowardice and misconduct at the battle of Chickamauga. Although he was cleared, his military career, like that of Don Carlos Buell, would be ruined. Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders (Baton Rouge, 1964), 342; Fitch, Army of the Cumberland, 99-108; Philadelphia Press, October 24, December 18, 1862; Alfred P. James, "General James Scott Negley," Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, XIV (1931), 76-77.

Although a direct cause and effect relationship cannot be proven in the command change, it is not unlikely that once more the governor's will was done.

When Rosecrans took command of the now demoralized Federal army the future seemed particularly bleak and unpropitious. William B. Bickham, a correspondent for the Cincinnati Commercial and closely connected to the Army of the Cumberland, described the foreboding prospects: "The season was pressing sharply upon winter--and winter in Tennessee means cold, and snow, and rain, and boundless mud; and these mean hospitals thronged with suffering soldiers, and valleys crowded with the bodies of the dead."[146]

The Confederate army now lay south of Nashville at Murfreesboro, having returned from Kentucky through Cumberland Gap to Knoxville, where by train it had reached Middle Tennessee. Newly reorganized and still potent, the Army of Tennessee was visited by President Jefferson Davis, naturally anxious that the Federal Army be kept at bay.[147] Meanwhile, with the railroad connections being restored, pressure began to mount on Rosecrans for an offensive. However, the Federal commander, in the midst of reorganizing, drilling, and gathering subsistence for his army, resisted all entreaties for a forward movement. Declaring that "I will not move until I am ready!

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[146]W[illiam] D. B[ickham], Rosecrans' Campaign with the Fourteenth Army Corps, or the Army of the Cumberland (Cincinnati, 1863), 12. This particular book appeared during the spring of 1863 and caused considerable comment in Nashville. Nashville Press, June 8, 1863.

[147]John Berrien Lindsley, ed., The Military Annals of Tennessee: Confederate (Nashville, 1886), 77-78.

I will not move for popular effect! War is a business to be conducted systematically," Rosecrans resolved not to be driven into a misstep by public clamor.[148]

Among those disturbed by the general inefficiency of the army was Andrew Johnson. Anxious that the Federal troops resume their march to relieve East Tennessee, he telegraphed President Lincoln. "If the army here should move forward & drive before it or disperse the rebels, letting us into East Tenn." he believed, "we could then raise a strong force" from among the loyal mountaineers of that section of the state.[149] "Why does not Rosecrans move?" demanded "a very distinguished Tennessean," according to W. D. Bickham, the correspondent for the Cincinnati Commercial, who probably was describing Governor Johnson. For he asserted that the suggestion was "insinuated from Nashville to Washington," and otherwise regarded the Tennessee executive as a troublesome functionary despised by the rebels and distrusted by the Unionists. Aside from some minor civil duties "there was really nothing else for the Governor to do," since most of the responsibilities of his office "really devolved on General Rosecrans."[150] For his part the governor remained contemptuous of

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[148]Fitch, Army of the Cumberland, 367-77; Bickham, Rosecrans' Campaign, 120.

[149]Johnson to Lincoln, December 8, 1862, Lincoln Papers.

[150]Bickham, Rosecrans' Campaign, 120, 84. The author, the correspondent for the Cincinnati Commercial, "officiated, since November last, as one of General Rosecrans' staff officers." Consequently, this opinion likely reflected the general's views. The attack on Johnson was roundly denounced by Unionist journals. Nashville Press, June 8, 1863; Nashville Union, June 17, 1863.

Federal operations during this period. When, on December 7, Morgan's freebooters defeated and captured a superior Federal force in a poorly contested fray at Hartsville, he sneered, "I suppose everybody was asleep & taken by surprise as usual."[151]

By Christmas, however, Rosecrans was ready to test his newly trained and supplied Army of the Cumberland. With enough rations to supply his troops until the Cumberland would be navigable, the Federal commander decided to advance on Bragg's relaxed forces at Murfreesboro, where Christmas cotillions and seasonal soirees were in full swing. Marching in three columns, the Federal army reached the main rebel position on Stones River outside Murfreesboro on December 30. Here in the last hours of 1863 they began one of the most sanguinary battles of the war, engaging some 75,000 men in a rain-chilled encounter in muddy cotton fields, through dense cedar brakes, up stony slopes, and across disputed barricades. Using cannon, musket, and even a genuine bayonet charge, the Federal troops drove the butternuts from their positions despite epic resistance. If the Confederate Army yielded the field, however, the Army of the Cumberland was so mangled from its nearly 8,700 casualties that it could not resume the campaign for another six months.[152] Murfreesboro, the once festive city of rebel celebrations and high

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[151]Johnson to Lincoln, December 8, 1862, Lincoln Papers.

[152]Nevins, War for the Union, II, 375-76; Henry M. Cist, The Army of the Cumberland (New York, 1882), 137-153; Bickham, Rosecrans' Campaign, 147-327.

expectations, became "one great hospital, filled with Nationals and Confederates."[153]

Later that winter Johnson went on a tour of the North, leaving Nashville after a year of almost constant rebel threats and sieges. He would carry his message of unremitting Unionism to the great cities of the Midwest and the East, hoping to rally the faithful against the growing strength of the Copperheads.[154] Meanwhile, his friends and other Unionists sought to use the respite from rebel threats on the capital to renew the fires of patriotism in the once beautiful city. A northern observer depicted the miserable conditions in the desolated capital: "The churches, literary institutions, public halls, and large mercantile and commercial establishment have been converted into hospitals, infirmaries, and lazar houses," he wrote. Sadly, "twelve thousand national sick, sore, diseased, and rotten men lie within; the grave-yards and vacant lots within the city limits contain the carcasses of seven thousand Federal and rebel victims of disease." The journalist sneered at the demoralized city where "the streets, avenues, and alleys abound in drunken soldiers, deserters, rowdy citizens, runaway slaves, paupers, vagrant children, mud, filth, ruin and desolation, while the very air is filled with contagion and [an] oppressively offensive smell--the fruits of Secession!"[155]

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[153]Ford, Beatty Memoirs, 163.

[154]See, for example, Johnson's speech at Indianapolis, February 26, 1863, Indianapolis Journal, February 27, 1863.

[155]Philadelphia Press, March 19, 1863.

Although the rebel threat to Nashville momentarily subsided, signs of friction between the provisional government and the military command remained. However, the animosity between Johnson and Rosecrans was not so pronounced as earlier difficulties with Don Carlos Buell. Many of the issues simply revolved around jurisdictional disputes and the activities of individual military officials.[156] Soon after Rosecrans assumed command he introduced a military police system directed by "Colonel" William Truesdail, a civilian, regarded by the governor as "wholly incompetent, if not corrupt, in the grossest sense of the term."[157] Despite a U. S. court, a U. S. attorney, and a U. S. marshal, and a mayor, city council, city police, and recorder's court, in effect, "all the machinery necessary for the execution of the laws," and all operating in an orderly manner, there was also a provost court and the army detective police operation. Consequently, "the Provost Court and Detective Police here, by the extensive jurisdiction assumed," the provisional governor asserted, "have not only excited a feeling of indignation among the more conservative portion of the community, but have greatly impaired the confidence of the loyal men." In view of the concern of the community, especially over "the summary manner in which they undertake to dispose of the persons & property of citizens," he called for an

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[156] See, for example, the dispute over the seizure of the warehouse of H. and B. Douglas for Federal purposes. William H. Sidell to Robert B. Mitchell, February 4, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[157] Johnson to Lincoln, January 11, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XX, pt. 2, p. 317.

investigation of Truesdail and the army police system.[158] Rosecrans, however, defended his operatives, blaming complaints on "smugglers and unscrupulous Jews, who have been detected in contraband trade," but promised to investigate. However, he delayed and temporized even after the "breath of calumny" had been "wafted to the Presidential ears."[159]

The problems of jurisdiction between Johnson and Rosecrans were often matters of common knowledge in those out-of-state cities served by newspapers with reporters following the Army of the Cumberland. "His position must be clearly defined; and if he allows his rights and powers to be usurped by any temporary military commander of the post," a correspondent for the Louisville Journal observed, "it is his duty to the Government to protest promptly and decisively against such usurpation."[160] In Washington, General Halleck, who, also often enough, had received copious communications from Nashville about the conflict between the army and the provisional government, was prodded by the war department to explain Johnson's role more fully to Rosecrans. Noting that Lincoln had appointed a military governor "to reestablish the civil authorities, courts, and jurisdictions, so far as the circumstances of the case might render it practicable," the general-in-chief ordered Rosecrans not to interfere

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[158] Johnson to Rosecrans, January 14, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[159] Rosecrans to Johnson, January 17, 1862, ibid.; Fitch, Army of the Cumberland, 353.

[160] Louisville Journal, November 12, 1862.

with the local and state authorities. Allowing that clear definitions were not always possible between military and civil jurisdictions, Halleck warned that all civil and criminal cases must be left to the appropriate courts, when operating in the state. Only in those sections of the state where no regularly constituted civil authority existed should military courts be used to try those offenses otherwise left to civil jurisdiction. In concluding his orders, Halleck sought to avoid further abuses by advising that "all matters of local police should be left to the civil authorities, and that provost-marshals should be charged only with matters of military police, and that their powers should be confined within narrow limits."[161]

Rosecrans stoutly denied that any such conflict existed between Johnson and himself. Aware that the governor would be conferring with the secretary of war about conditions in Tennessee while he was in Washington, Rosecrans hastened to mend his fences. Seeking to counter the "impression" that a conflict existed between the provisional governor and the military, the general wrote the governor in care of Secretary of War Stanton. "You know very well how often I have assured you I would do all I could to build up and support Civil Authority and aid you every way in my power," he insisted. Urging Johnson to communicate "freely" with him, Rosecrans promised to rectify "all matters of Conflict & Complaint" or "show

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[161]Halleck to Rosecrans, March 20, 1863, OR, Ser. 3, III, 77-78. Johnson had long been convinced that the provost marshal's office was a source of abuse even under Buell. See Johnson and John F. Miller to Buell, August 8, 1862, ibid., Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 286.

you decisive public reasons for not doing so."[162] Also sensitive to the governor's influence and seeking to muffle the impact of any complaints reaching Lincoln's attention, Rosecrans telegraphed the president to plead his willingness to cooperate with the civil authority in Tennessee. Insisting that no specific charges or complaints had been forthcoming in spite of his several requests for "the specifications that I might remedy the evil," the general then sought the president's assistance. Should just grievance exist, "I want to know it and appeal to you to order the complaints to be communicated to me fully," he urged. "If the Fox is unearthed, I will promise to skin him or pay for his hide."[163]

With the news of the difficulties between the military and the provisional government becoming a matter of public discussion, a Johnson supporter observed that the Tennessee executive and the commander of the Army of the Cumberland were well-matched. "When they get at it somebody will get hurt." Suggesting that events were still in flux, the commentator expected that the outcome would be decisive. "It will be nip-and-tuck for a while, but it will settle things in Tennessee."[164] Reports continued to surface, raising

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[162]Rosecrans to Stanton [for Johnson], April 15, 1863, Johnson Papers. Johnson telegraphed Rosecrans immediately, pledging his full cooperation and promising to confer with him upon his return to Tennessee. Johnson to Rosecrans, April 8, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XXIII, pt. 2, p. 220.

[163]Rosecrans to Lincoln, April 22, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[164]Nashville Press, May 16, 1863.

concerns about unlawful seizure of property and arbitrary arrests of innocent individuals.[165]

Adding to the confusion and complaints was the imposition of the oath of allegiance upon all persons then living in Nashville. Although Johnson had earlier applied the oath selectively to purge the city and county governments and neutralize the influence of prominent groups, like ministers, lawyers, and certain political leaders, he had threatened but not demanded sworn fealty of the entire population. However, on March 31, Brigadier General Robert B. Mitchell, the post commander, issued an order requiring all citizens to take the oath of allegiance or a non-combatant's parole, foreswearing any hostile intentions toward the Federal government.[166] Since the citizens were given the choice of the oath or the parole--or being sent south--the result was chaos. By mid-April there was "great trouble and alarm in the community" with "many citizens arrested for politics."[167] With a continuous procession of families and individuals coming to the provost marshal's office to take the oath or parole and post bonds, ranging from a few hundred to several thousand dollars, Mitchell issued a new Draconian measure. Mindful

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[165]Fitch, Army of the Cumberland, 356; Jacob Bloomstein to Johnson, [August] 5, 1863, Johnson Papers; Nashville Press, July 31, 1863.

[166]Nashville Union, April 23, 1863; Philadelphia Press, May 4, 1863. Mitchell's orders required even foreign citizens to take the oath or be forcibly placed outside the Federal lines, causing the French minister to complain to Secretary of State Seward and forcing Halleck to revoke Mitchell's orders against foreigners. Halleck to Rosecrans, May 22, 1863, OR, Ser. 3, III, 217.

[167]Lindsley, Diary, 96.

of the ease with which smugglers, spies, and other non-desirables moved about in Nashville, the post commander decreed that the citizens must report all visitors to the authorities within one hour of their arrival, including their names, residences, and purposes of visit.[168] Mitchell's orders created great concern, even among the Unionists.

The enforced exile of dozens of recalcitrant rebels and the sterner measures toward secessionists in general apparently complicated already existing difficulties between the Unionists and the military. The superintendent of the insane asylum, Dr. William A. Cheatham, and his wife, a sister-in-law to the rebel John H. Morgan, were arrested on charges of spying and illegal correspondence with Mrs. Morgan.[169] When the Cheathams were ordered to a prison in Alton, Illinois, John S. Brien, Nashville Unionist, Whig lawyer, legislator, and jurist, petitioned the governor to secure a stay of their sentence. He concluded urgently, "your presence here is very important."[170] Johnson responded affirmatively, requesting that the physician and his wife be held at Louisville, pending further orders.[171] Meanwhile, other southern sympathizers sought the

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[168]Louisville Journal, April 30, 1863; Nashville Union, April 23, 1863. Mitchell had already demonstrated a rigorous approach to dealing with the rebels. During the winter he had arbitrarily quartered a number of wounded rebel soldiers in the homes of several prominent Nashville secessionists with stringent orders concerning their care and treatment. Washington Chronicle, February 6, 1863.

[169]Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 508n.

[170]McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 78-79; John S. Brien to Johnson, May 13, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[171]Johnson to Joseph Holt, May 26, 1863, OR, Ser. 2, V, 709-10.

governor's intercession, one pleading that "she is now & has been your friend and she begs that you will parole her husband."[172] Nonetheless, between April 22 and May 8, 1863, nearly 8,000 residents of the Nashville area had been "put to the oath." Nearly 200 non-juring residents were sent South.[173]

Although the governor might declaim in favor of arbitrary arrests ("there have not been enough of them") he clearly resented the intrusion of Rosecrans' Beadles, especially Chief of Army Police Truesdail, into his sphere of authority.[174] He demanded an investigation by an independent commission, preferably to include his Union colleagues, Horace Maynard and John S. Brien. "The abuses are enormous," he complained, "and should be arrested."[175] With Unionists grumbling at being obligated "to crouch at the feet of military authority," Rosecrans slowly began to respond to Johnson's demands for an inquiry. Under great public and political pressure to put his house in order, the commander appointed one of his own former staff officers, Captain Temple Clark, as a special investigator. Predictably, the low ranking official did not fail his previous superior. Instead he dismissed charges of misconduct on the part of Truesdail and his minions. In the process he took an indirect

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[172]William B. Campbell to Johnson, May 27, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[173]Nashville Press, May 9, 25, 1863.

[174]Speech in Philadelphia, March 11, 1863, Washington Chronicle, March 13, 1863.

[175]Johnson to Stanton, May 17, 1863, Stanton Papers.

swipe at the governor, observing that "an institution like the army police, so vast and varied in its operations, assailing so many in their pecuniary, personal, and political interests, should have powerful and numerous enemies, is not to be wondered at."[176] Although Johnson and Rosecrans might agree in theory concerning the need to coerce the rebels, clearly the general's methods came in conflict with the Tennessean's efforts to restore his state to the Union.

Before Johnson returned to Nashville on May 30, Benjamin C. Truman, his ubiquitous supporter, had complained that the military treated the governor with disrespect and had demeaned his authority. "Out of the multiplicity of generals, colonels, captains, quartermasters, detectives, and others, who hold office here, none seemed anxious to co-operate with him in establishing law and order," the journalist insisted, "but on the contrary, all evidently desired to pull the reverse way of the Governor, caring very little what might be the consequences, so long as they should win."[177] Earlier events obviously had justified Truman's complaint but the governor was not without considerable resources for achieving his own purposes.

Johnson had used his time well in Washington, persuading the Lincoln government to continue the pressure on Rosecrans for an East Tennessee expedition and securing other notable concessions. To facilitate the recovery of the eastern portion of the state, the war department authorized the governor to raise 25,000 troops,

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[176]Fitch, Army of the Cumberland, 353-56.

[177]Philadelphia Press, April 27, 1863.

potentially an aggregate force roughly comparable to Bragg's Army of Tennessee. Moreover, the Tennessee military governor was empowered to recruit soldiers in other states--in effect making Johnson a national recruiting officer in the efforts to relieve his home section.[178] In a move further to reduce conflicts and eliminate confusion, the governor was given possession and control of all public buildings and property in Nashville; all vacant and abandoned property of rebels in the state; and "all abandoned lands and plantations that may come within your power." In addition, his authority over the contrabands or runaway and abandoned slaves was sharply defined:

> You will also take in charge all abandoned slaves, or colored persons, who have been held in bondage, and whose masters have been, or are now engaged in rebellion, and provide for their useful employment and subsistence in such manner as may be best adapted to their necessities, and the circumstances in which you find them.[179]

Thus Johnson returned to Tennessee, his powers greatly augmented, his national reputation further enhanced (due to his highly publicized speaking tour), and his working relationship with the Lincoln administration made even more secure. Among some Unionists also he would be seen as their protector in difficulties with the Federal army. "He rescued and protected, in many instances, loyal people from the

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[178] Stanton to Johnson, March 28, 1863, OR, Ser. 3, III, 105-6; Stanton to Johnson, April 15, 1863, Johnson Papers; Johnson to Whom it may concern, n.d., and B. P. Wells to Johnson, May 8, 1863, Military Governor's Papers, 1862-1865, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

[179] Stanton to Johnson, April 18, 1863, Stanton Papers. A fuller treatment of Johnson's role in the emancipation process will follow in a subsequent chapter.

repacity of lawless petty military officers," the Johnson organ proclaimed.[180]

The Washington visit also resulted in another responsibility being given the governor. Aware of the logistical problems faced by the Federal army, he had long supported the construction of a railroad from central Kentucky to East Tennessee for military purposes.[181] Although Lincoln endorsed the concept, construction would never be undertaken during the war. However, the Tennessean was given the authority to complete another project closer to Nashville. His new responsibility was the Nashville and Northwestern Railroad, originally founded in 1854 by Vernon K. Stevenson, the erstwhile rebel quartermaster. The line had progressed only twenty-nine miles west of Nashville, running toward Kingston Springs. Still, the road bed was virtually complete, lacking only the cross ties and rails all the way to the Tennessee River, a distance of seventy-eight miles.[182] Johnson and others foresaw the military advantages of completing the road to the more navigable Tennessee River and giving the beleaguered capital another supply line across rolling or generally level terrain and thereby more easily repaired track in the wake of rebel wreckers.[183]

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[180] Nashville Union, June 17, 1863.

[181] Louisville Journal, December 31, 1862; John G. Eve to Johnson, January 1, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 89; Eve to Johnson, June 19, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[182] Wooldridge, History of Nashville, 330.

[183] Johnson to Rosecrans, August 18, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XXX, pt. 3, p. 67; Jesse C. Burt, "Sherman's Logistics and Andrew Johnson," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XV (1956), 200.

Consequently, General Rosecrans placed the building of the road under the governor's supervision, providing money, materials, engineers, labor, and equipment, "the whole to be under your Command."[184]

Perhaps intimidated by the governor or at least confused by the recent display of his political adroitness in dealing with the Lincoln administration, Rosecrans submitted to this extraordinary exercise of authority.[185] "Your orders in regard to the construction of the Northwestern Railroad I have taken steps to execute, and will proceed to have it finished without delay," the governor promised.[186] The disputes of previous months seemed to moderate somewhat. Whether by military necessity, chance, or design, Truesdail, Mitchell, and other officials deemed obnoxious to the Union element in Nashville moved on to new assignments.[187] Johnson proceeded to complete the railroad, mainly using impressed and even volunteer contraband labor.[188]

After months of preparation, Rosecrans finally moved his army out of Murfreesboro and by September 9, had maneuvered Bragg out

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[184]Rosecrans to Johnson, August 27, 1863, Military Governor's Papers.

[185]Johnson's tour of the North had been a triumph. Everywhere he spoke to great crowds of enthusiastic supporters. If there was any doubt that he was a national hero in the wake of secession, the winter and spring tour had washed away uncertainty in a tide of patriotic fervor. See, for example, Philadelphia Bulletin, March 12, 1863; New York Times, March 15, 1863.

[186]Johnson to Rosecrans, September 2, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XXX, pt. 3, p. 297.

[187]Nashville Press, June 3, 9, July 29, 1863.

[188]Nashville Union, October 4, 1863.

of Chattanooga, occupying the town without a battle. By this time General Ambrose Burnside, now in command of the Department of the Ohio, occupied Knoxville much to the delight of Johnson, Brownlow, and other Unionists.

On September 19-20, Bragg's strongly reinforced troops fell on the Army of the Cumberland at Chickamauga Station, south of Chattanooga, driving two complete corps from the field and forcing Rosecrans himself into the disorderly mob retreating to Chattanooga. Only George H. Thomas' troops kept the battle from assuming the rout proportions of Bull Run, earning their commander the sobriquet of "the Rock of Chickamauga." When Rosecrans seemed paralyzed by the disaster and later appeared willing to allow his army to be starved by the subsequent seige of Chattanooga, Thomas replaced him as commander of the Army of the Cumberland. At the same time, Grant became supreme commander of the western armies.

The governor had complained of "the tardiness of Rosecrans, and of these long months of precious time wasted in the construction of useless fortifications" but nonetheless regarded him as "a patriot at heart and not a damned traitor like his predecessor."[189] He seemed to have had a genuine appreciation for the general's circumstances at times. "I have never believed, and do not now believe, that you fully understood the character and extent of the

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[189]Charles A. Dana to Stanton, September 8, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XXX, pt. 1, pp. 182-83.

proceedings under Truesdail's direction," he had declared.[190] After the humiliating debacle at Chickamauga, he ended a routine dispatch to the troubled general with an uncharacteristically warm benediction: "May the protecting arm of a just and Almighty God be suspended over you and your gallant army," he pleaded, "and pass you through it as it did the children of Israel through the Red Sea."[191]

With Grant in command, the great western army at last began the long epochal march to Atlanta. However, the forward movement was halted in North Georgia at Ringgold Gap on November 27 by an outmanned but plucky rebel force. Thereafter both armies went into winter quarters. In mid-March, 1864, Grant was called to Washington, promoted to lieutenant general, and elevated to the command of all the Federal armies. Filling his place in the West, General William T. Sherman assumed charge of the Military Division of the Mississippi, including the combined armies of the Tennessee, the Ohio, and the Cumberland.[192] Andrew Johnson was discouraged by the slight to his favorite general George H. Thomas. "I feel satisfied from what I know and hear that placing the command of the department under General Sherman, over Thomas will produce disappointment in the public

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[190]Johnson to Rosecrans, June 1, 1863, ibid., XXIII, pt. 2, pp. 380-81.

[191]Johnson to Rosecrans, October 12, 1863, ibid., XXX, pt. 4, p. 308. He told a delegation of Cincinnati citizens that Rosecrans had displayed bravery, ability, and skill, dismissing the idea that any charges should be preferred against the general. Chicago Tribune, October 27, 1863.

[192]McKinney, Education in Violence, 313.

mind and impair the public service."[193] However, the White House remained unmoved by the governor's stricture on this decision and anxiously supported Sherman in his task of capturing Atlanta.

Although Sherman would cloak himself in glory and controversy in the Atlanta campaign and the subsequent march to the sea, he, like previous commanders, would find Andrew Johnson almost as formidable as the Confederate Army. Indeed the general, such a master at logistics, could not break "Johnson's snapping turtle hold over the Northwestern Railroad" until just before the fall of Atlanta.[194] On June 13, 1864, Sherman telegraphed the governor, first congratulating him on being nominated as Lincoln's running mate and then requesting that he turn over the management of the railroad to the military. "I am informed the railroad is now done, and it will soon be needed to the full extent of its capacity."[195] The next day Johnson dispatched "my old friend Michael Burns," the president of the Nashville and Chattanooga and the Northwestern Railroads to Washington to lay

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[193]Johnson to Lincoln, March 21, 1864, OR, Ser. 1, XXXII, pt. 3, p. 105. Sherman did not share Johnson's enthusiasm for "the Rock of Chickamauga," asserting that "I have again and again tried to impress on Thomas that we must assail and not defend." Indeed the defensive attitude permeated the troops. "My chief source of trouble is with the Army of the Cumberland," he later explained. "A fresh furrow in a plowed field will stop the whole column, and all begin to intrench." Sherman to Grant, June 18, 1864, ibid., XXXVIII, pt. 4, p. 507.

[194]Burt, "Sherman Logistics," 204-11.

[195]Sherman to Johnson, June 13, 1864, OR, Ser. 1, XXXVIII, pt. 4, p. 466.

before the president the problems facing the railroads.[196] Despite Johnson's insistence that the Northwestern line had been placed under his authority, the road, once it had been completed in the spring, should already have been turned over to the military, according to earlier orders issued by Stanton.[197]

Once before when Sherman had commandeered the Nashville and Chattanooga and banned all non-military traffic, including army rations destined to relieve the civilian population of East Tennessee, the president under pressure from Halleck and Grant only reluctantly supported the general.[198] On August 5, Sherman requested "exclusive use of the railroad from the Tennessee to Nashville," reminding the governor that the Northwestern would be operated under the same temporary military management of the army as had handled the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad.[199] Lincoln apparently put Burns off when he arrived in Washington, sending him to Stanton on August 3, requesting only that the "Hon. Sec. of War please see & hear the bearer, Mr. Burns."[200] The Tennessee governor had insisted that the

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[196]Johnson to Lincoln, June 14, 1864, Manuscript Collection, John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

[197]Burt, "Sherman Logistics," 202, 208-9.

[198]Ibid., 208-9.

[199]Sherman to Johnson, August 5, 1864, OR, Ser. 1, XXXVIII, pt. 5, p. 368. In another dispatch, Sherman, indicating that he expected only temporary control, advised that the road should revert to "the management of Governor Johnson" when the Cumberland became navigable. Sherman to Joseph D. Webster, August 5, 1864, ibid.

[200]Lincoln to Stanton, August 3, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 478.

"Government owes him much, for his hearty cooperation with the Secretary of War and others in constructing this great Military and Commercial enterprise." Through his effort "we soon can be relieved from the exacting extortions of the Louisville and Nashville Road, and all our Troops, Munitions of war & c--transported over a much shorter, cheaper, and more secure, and at all seasons, certain line to this point."[201] Johnson argued heatedly that "the same and stronger reasons for taking the Nashville and Louisville have existed since the Federal troops first entered Nashville." Nevertheless, the military was content to allow that line to remain, inexplicably, in private hands at great expense to the Federal treasury. "The Government has paid hundreds of thousands for use of that road, which found its way into the pockets of traitors, and are for the support of treason." Noting that the military had already exercised "the exclusive control" over the Northwestern line "so far as transportation and supplies for the Government are concerned since June 9," the disgruntled Tennessee chieftain suggested that surrendering the railroad to army operation and management was not only unnecessary but injurious to innocent stockholders far removed from the scene.[202] Apparently unmoved by the arguments of Johnson and Burns, the president and the secretary of war authorized Sherman on August 6 "to take military possession of said railroad, its rolling

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[201] Johnson to Lincoln, June 14, 1864, Brown University Library.

[202] Johnson to Sherman, August 7, 1864, OR, Ser. 1, XXXVIII, pt. 5, p. 411.

stock, equipment, & c., for exclusive military use, and revoke all prior and conflicting orders and authority."[203]

At long last the governor had met his match. He had encountered a general with the same aggressive instincts as he possessed. Nevertheless, Sherman attained control over the railroad only after presidential intervention, so firm had been the governor's "snapping turtle" bite. Nonetheless, Sherman may well have been in the governor's debt in far greater measure than he would have admitted in the summer of 1864. Not only should Johnson and Burns be credited with persuading Lincoln to authorize completion of the vital Northwestern link with the Tennessee River, but it should be remembered that the Tennessee politician probably prevented Buell from surrendering Nashville to the Confederates. Had this blunder occurred the rebel government would have been restored to the whole of Tennessee except for the Memphis salient; the Confederacy given an enormous psychological and political victory at a time when the British and French governments were strongly considering recognition of the cotton republic; and finally, the great Nashville supply depot that had been created by the Federal quartermasters lost to the Union cause. Sherman later greatly augmented the inherent value of the city as a supply center.[204] Had the governor acquiesced to Sherman's more cautious predecessor the wonderful logistical system that he developed might have been more difficult to

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[203]Stanton to Johnson, August 6, 1863, House Reports No. 34, "Affairs of Southern Railroads," 39 Cong., 2 sess., 270; Special order relating to the Northwestern Railroad, August 6, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 478n.

[204]Burt, "Sherman Logistics," 206 and passim.

effect. The march to Atlanta and thence to the sea could have been even more tragically delayed, thereby prolonging the war several more months.

The Confederates understood the significance of Nashville and the logistical arrangement that depended on holding the city and its vital railroads. After abandoning Atlanta on September 1, John Bell Hood, then commanding the Army of Tennessee, sought to force Sherman to give up his campaign by striking North at the Union supply lines. The result was the costly and vainglorious battle of Franklin (November 30, 1864) and the decisive and epic battle of Nashville (December 15-16), fought between Hood and Thomas, who had been sent North to protect Sherman's supply lines. Sometimes regarded as the war's most decisive encounter, the battle of Nashville barely saved Thomas from an impatient Grant who almost replaced him, feeling "Thomas is too slow to move and too brave to run away."[205]

The war ended for Nashville and its residents that cold rainy evening when Hood's shattered army marched down the Franklin pike, bitterly singing a parody of "The Yellow Rose of Texas":

> But now I'm going to leave you;
> My heart is full of woe,
> I'm going back to Georgia to see my Uncle Joe.
> You may talk about your Beauregard and sing of
> General Lee
> But the gallant Hood of Texas played hell in
> Tennessee.[206]

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[205] McKinney, Education in Violence, 427; Stanley F. Horn, The Decisive Battle of Nashville (Baton Rouge, 1956), v-xiii.

[206] Horn, "Nashville During the Civil War," 22.

Johnson's relationship with the various military commanders had been an almost unbroken series of command disputes, jurisdictional quarrels, and strategy differences. Incensed by the tentative, unimaginative, and often wrong-headed approach to the fighting, he intervened regularly and shamelessly in matters that the military might well regard as beyond his area of concern and expertise.[207] Johnson took his role as military governor seriously; he often bullied the Lincoln administration into making the hard choices that ultimately served to help preserve the restoration experiment in Tennessee; but, by his sometimes ruthless and always relentless pressure on the White House and war department, he nurtured the original Lincoln plan to relieve East Tennessee and thereby sever the vital communications link between Virginia and the rest of the Confederacy.[208] Perhaps, in that one prodigious feat, the former tailor vindicated his appointment as military governor.

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[207] "No general has yet made a 'hit,' who has studiously opposed the Military Governor," a perceptive correspondent observed in the dark hours of 1862. Philadelphia Press, December 18, 1862.

[208] Confederate sources considered the loss of East Tennessee a potential disaster, fearing that once in possession, a Union army could not be dislodged by 100,000 troops. See J. C. Rome to Anson Stager, January 7, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

CHAPTER V

ANDREW AND ABRAHAM: THE POLITICS OF NAIVETE, IDEALISM, AND EXPEDIENCY

In January, 1862, the commander-in-chief, as was so often the case, found himself in profound disagreement with one of his field generals, Don Carlos Buell. Predictably methodical and unswervingly independent, Buell had responded to a presidential interrrogatory by indicating his intentions to take Nashville rather than follow the president's wishes and invade East Tennessee. Distressed by the knowledge that "our friends in East Tennessee are being hanged and driven to despair, and even now I fear, are thinking of taking rebel arms for the sake of personal protection," Lincoln explained a factor that made Buell's response even more disturbing. "My despatch, to which yours is an answer, was sent with the knowledge of Senator Johnson and Representative Maynard of East Tennessee, and they will be upon me to know the answer, which I cannot safely show them," the president complained. "They would despair--possibly resign to go and save their families somehow, or die with them."[1]

Other than its value as an illustration of the low esteem in which Buell seemed to hold the president's views, the exchange between Lincoln and the commander of the Army of the Ohio remains useful to

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[1]Lincoln to Buell, January 6, 1862, Basler, Works of Lincoln, V, 91.

show the respect that the Republican accorded the Democrat from East Tennessee. Indeed Johnson's spread eagle stance for the Union had made him a genuine national hero in the dark days after Bull Run when the ineptitude of the Federal army left the Unionists searching for a champion.[2] His spirited oratory and his own efforts in Tennessee prior to secession served to fill a void in a nation divided and confused by the cavalcade of events. That Lincoln would turn to Johnson to help restore his state was a logical move by a politician gifted at reading the handwriting on the wall. Who else could measure up to the heroic proportions attained by the East Tennessean? The president had already settled that question back in the secession winter when he turned to the senator on matters of patronage, despite the anguished howls from Union Whigs thunderstruck that a Breckinridge Democrat should be deciding who should be postmaster, deputy marshal, or pension agent.[3] Their protests notwithstanding, Johnson's word

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[2]Winston, Andrew Johnson, 208-15; Milton, Age of Hate, 102-11. Even William H. Seward apparently forgot his own ambitions and partisan goals momentarily, being caught up in the Tennessean's call to arms. Having melodramatically promised to follow "the first brave and disinterested man who leads the way," Seward professed to have discovered his champion. "I found a leader in Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, a man who tolerated and excused, if he did not justify slavery; and as all the world knew that I then abhorred and detested it." George E. Baker, ed., The Works of William H. Seward (5 vols., Boston, 1972 [1853-1884]), V, 486.

[3]John C. McGaughey to Johnson, March 28, 1861, and Samuel R. Anderson to Johnson, March 26, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 432, 437; James L. Baumgardner, Andrew Johnson and the Patronage (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1968), 24-28.

became fiat. One supplicant seeking a foreign mission "or some better position--" desired only a few lines of endorsement from the Tennessee politician, confiding that "I saw the President and he said--'See Andrew Johnson & whatever he Can not do: I Can not.'"[4] A Johnson supporter, writing from Alabama, had a suggestion. "Why do you not make the President, turn out the Post Master at Memphis Ten. who abuses you so outrageously in the Avalanch."[5] Soon thereafter the acting postmaster general contacted the senator "to see and consult" with him "if reference to candidates and the propriety of making removals at several of the important offices" due to the postmasters "being active disunionists."[6] Another individual, supporting a friend's application for a position as route agent, claimed that Johnson had more influence than any person in the state.[7] Thus the bond had been established early, even before Lincoln entered the darker period of his presidency.

That these two great Commoners of the Civil War era should join forces in crushing out treason and rebellion would seem to be one of the immutable accidents of history. For they were a study in contrast in almost every regard except for the ordinary happenstance of their plebeian birth and their common desire to preserve the Union.

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[4]William R. Hurley to Johnson, July 4, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 540-41.

[5]Thomas M. Peters to Johnson, January 15, 1861, ibid., 173.

[6]Horatio King to Johnson, January 26, 1861, ibid., 186.

[7]E. H. Dunn to Johnson, March 2, 1861, Johnson Papers.

Lincoln, the phenomenon of the prairies, was almost a stranger and singularly out-of-place in Washington:

> The long, lean, sallow frontier lawyer was a shock to people who were unused to the Western type; and his homely phrases and mispronunciations grated on Eastern ears. It was impossible that Lincoln should have inspired confidence or admiration; but some saw shrewdness, honesty and even a natural dignity in his face. Its ugliness was partially redeemed by his eyes, though their dreamy, meditative expression did not bespeak either firmness or force.[8]

Compare the rumpled, easy-going, self-effacing, gangly western attorney with the outspoken Washington veteran from East Tennessee; an immaculately dressed, well-groomed "short stocky man with smooth face, swarthy complexion and an air of obstinate determination," and some would say, even a Cromwell, a man of destiny.[9]

Two days before Lincoln's fateful inauguration, the Tennessee senator launched a slashing, rousing, and inspiring defense of his Union position, impaling the senator from Oregon, Joseph Lane, the former Breckinridge running-mate and southern sympathizer. Lane had ridiculed the Tennessean in an earlier speech, accusing him of "exulting stupidity and triumphant ignorance." Johnson's response was bold, venomous, and devastating, sending the galleries into tidal

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[8] Margaret Leech, Reveille in Washington: 1860-1865 (New York, 1941), 38.

[9] Quoted in Winston, Andrew Johnson, 233. Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana, touring the battlefront during Rosecrans' leisurely campaign against East Tennessee, described the military governor as being "short and stocky, of dark complexion, smooth face, dark hair, dark eyes and of great determination of appearance." He also insisted that the Tennessean "took more whiskey than most gentlemen would have done." Charles A. Dana, Recollections of the Civil War (New York, 1902), 105-6.

waves of applause and causing an uproar. Disgusted secessionists denounced the senator in outrage but the Union cause was emboldened by his threats against the traitors ("I would have them arrested; and, if convicted, within the meaning and scope of the Constitution, by the Eternal God I would execute them.").[10]

Johnson's speeches and patriotic histrionics endeared him to northerners and especially to those wanting Lincoln to balance his cabinet with a few loyal Democrats. Prior to coming to Washington the president-elect had been entreated by a number of persons visiting Springfield to consider appointing the senator from Tennessee to a cabinet post. "I have no idea Mr. Johnson would accept such a position," the Illinoisan responded, adroitly. "His course is truly noble, but just as to be expected from a man possessing such a heart as him."[11] It is not surprising that the president-elect would be importuned to offer the senator a cabinet post. Benjamin C. Truman, the Johnson associate, journalist, and political agent, recalled that through his advocacy of populist measures like the homestead law "the Tennessean was a famous man before Abraham Lincoln was heard of outside his own State."[12]

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[10]Speech in Reply to Senator Lane, March 2, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 354.

[11]Quoted in Milton, Age of Hate, 104.

[12]Truman, "Anecdotes of Andrew Johnson," 435. O. P. Temple, an East Tennessee Whig lawyer and wartime ally of Johnson, declared that after his December, 1860, Union speech, the Tennessee senator "at once became the most popular man in the North, excepting Lincoln." Temple, Notable Men, 396.

If some individuals were promoting Johnson as a possible cabinet appointment before the rail splitter reached Washington, "others convinced that there are other 'Giants' than the 'Little one--,'" asserted that "the Douglas epidemic" had been eradicated, and by 1864, "many of our old fogy leaders will be extinguished." Consequently, Johnson should lead the Democracy in the next presidential election.[13] The editor of the almost moribund Nashville Democrat, in the midst of pleading for operating capital and an appointment as postmaster, expressed the same conviction. "You have made a national reputation during the recent stormy Congress, which in my opinion--almost insures you the candidacy for [the] Presidency four years hence."[14] Although such endorsements were ego fulfilling and personally satisfying, Johnson's responsibilities in Tennessee would provide experiences of a different character. Nevertheless, the senator from Tennessee and his speeches had served the nation well. "Jefferson Davis' idea that there might be a peaceful Secession or a compromise vanished into thin air," one historian observed. "The North was awakened to duty at last."[15]

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[13]Charles Arnold to Johnson, March 14, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 392-93.

[14]William R. Hurley to Johnson, March 14, 1862, ibid., 395. On the eve of the inauguration the Tennessee senator had almost upstaged the president-elect with his famous reply to Lane, delivered on the last night of the Thirty-sixth Congress. "It was the only occasion ever known when the spectators in the galleries of the senate stood upon their seats, swung their hats in the air and gave three cheers for a speaker, and that, too, in spite of the pounding of the presiding officer, and the stern order to clear the galleries and arrest the offenders." Knoxville Journal and Tribune, quoted in Temple, Notable Men, 397.

[15]Winston, Andrew Johnson, 215.

Johnson's journey to restore Tennessee would follow a curious path, one that ranged from the rustic training camps in Kentucky, where he urged his East Tennessee strategy on all who would listen, to the crowded Senate chamber, the gossipy halls, and conspiratorial cloak rooms of the nation's capitol where he rubbed elbows with many of those who would be his inveterate enemies in four years. Ultimately the senator's path to Tennessee led through the radicals' camp. For a time the byway did not seem wholly uncongenial.

Angered by Lincoln's cabinet appointment, especially his refusal to give posts to extremists like John C. Frémont, Cassius Clay, and Thaddeus Stevens; his seemingly non-committal comments after his election; and even his unheroic and unannounced entry into Washington (to foil a rumored assassination plot), the radical wing of the Republican party had concluded that the president-elect lacked the resolution to crush the rebellion even before his inauguration. The radicals represented the real driving force and cutting edge of Lincoln's party, including Michigan's grim Zachariah Chandler; terrifying old Thad Stevens of Pennsylvania; Ben Wade, the cocky Ohioan; the exquisite Massachusetts Senator Charles Summner, Jacobins all. When Lincoln failed to adopt an emancipation policy following the outbreak of rebellion and ignored their warnings about placing conservative Democrats in important military positions, the radicals howled in protest. They sought explanations for the inactivity of armies commanded by Democrats McClellan, Halleck, and Buell and raged at the return of runaway slaves. Convinced that the weak-kneed

Lincoln could not be trusted to prosecute a vigorous war against the lords of the lash, the radicals skillfully secured a resolution creating a joint congressional investigative body to review the management of the war; thus was born the famous Committee on the Conduct of the War. The committee's unceasing efforts to purge the army of conservative officers, the bitter partisanship of its direction, and the irregularities and inquisitorial character of its proceedings immediately gave the body a well-deserved Star Chamber reputation.[16]

Into this seething cauldron of radical discontent stepped Andrew Johnson, fresh from a disappointing sojourn in Kentucky where he waited in helpless rage while Buell cancelled his and Lincoln's plans for the invasion of East Tennessee.[17] Unique in the membership, the Tennessee senator was the only Democrat to enjoy the confidence

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[16]T. Harry Williams, Lincoln and the Radicals (Madison, Wisconsin, 1960 [1941]), 5-21, 64-75.

[17]Although there is no evidence for such a supposition, it seems plausible that Johnson and Lincoln may have already discussed by the fall of 1861 the possibility of the senator's becoming military governor. Perhaps the Tennessean had gone to Kentucky to follow the victorious invading army into East Tennessee, where he would be received in triumph and installed in power among his Union allies in his home section. Although such a conclusion is only speculative, this eventuality would have been a far less foreboding prospect than that which followed. For Johnson would have been surrounded by his friends instead of his enemies and, equally important, the rebels deprived of the vital rail lines, quartermaster stores, war materiél, ordnance, livestock, subsistence, and manpower in the region. Certainly some Unionists desired to reproduce the West Virginia experience and seize the imperial sceptre from the "late lords of the soil." It is perhaps significant that it was Johnson who presented the credentials of two men, representing the "restored government" of Virginia under the Pierpont regime and asked that they be seated as Virginia's senators. Secession precipitated several separatist movements in Tennessee's eastern section, most notably in the Greeneville convention of 1861 when a committee memorialized the

of the radicals who dominated the committee. Surrounded by men like Ben Wade, Zachariah Chandler of Michigan, Indiana's George W. Julian, the Pennsylvanian John Covode, and Daniel Gooch of Massachusetts, Johnson and his fellow Democrat, a New Yorker named Moses F. Odell, were intended to be tokens of the loyal opposition and no more.[18] However, Johnson welcomed his assignment since he could use this position to exhort the Lincoln administration to restore his home state.

On January 3, 1862, the Tennessean questioned Major Abner Doubleday, who reportedly fired the first gun in defense of Fort Sumter and had served in the Shenandoah campaign prior to appearing before the committee. There Johnson directed his attention toward the strategic implications of an East Tennessee invasion in coordination with the long-awaited action of the Army of the Potomac. Like a lawyer prompting a friendly witness, the senator, probably with a map as a prop, sought support for his view of the military situation:

> we have everything here now fixed ready for a forward movement; then when we look west we see the great stream of life of this rebellion coming in there; there is the

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legislature on the subject and later during the county and district elctions of 1864 when the Chattanooga Gazette and several like-minded politicians urged the creation of a new state from the loyal mountain regions of Tennessee, northern Georgia, and western North Carolina. Johnson, Maynard, and Brownlow, however, opposed this movement, believing that the slaveocracy was dead. See Remarks on Senators-elect from Virginia, July 13, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 573-79; 578-79n; New York Times, March 21, April 21, May 8, 1864.

[18] [T.] Harry Williams, "Andrew Johnson as a Member of the Committee on the Conduct of the War," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 12 (1940), 70-77.

> line of railroad running from Richmond to Lynchburg into Eastern Tennessee, connection with lines of communication by Chattanooga and the south, by Nashville, Memphis, across the Mississippi, to Little Rock.

When Doubleday agreed that the railroad ought to be interdicted and indicated his belief that such an action represented an extremely promising possibility for achieving the army's objectives, the satisfaction was obvious in Johnson's next interrogatories.

> Question. You, as a military man, understand how these operate. For instance, we have our position here [apparently using a map]; a column penetrates there and takes possession of that road at two or three places. That would be like taking two or three joints out of a backbone, or shutting our hand upon an artery and stopping the circulation.
> Answer. That would dissolve the army here at once, simply holding that position.
> Question. And substantially bag the whole confederacy?
> Answer. Yes, sir.[19]

Johnson's approach was to place the military witnesses on record in favor of an early movement of the army, involving an invasion of East Tennessee in conjunction with a march on Richmond. Consequently, he raised questions concerning the baneful effects of a winter of inactivity on army discipline and morale. When General Irwin McDowell conceded that he opposed going into winter quarters, referring to the political benefits that Washington derived from his dramatic Trenton campaign, the Tennessee politician asked another leading question. "There is a political element connected with this war which must not be overlooked?" The general concurred.[20] At no time during the

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[19] Senate Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War Nos. 70-108, 37 Cong., 3 sess., 211-13.

[20] Ibid., 158, 177, 211, 226, 142.

course of examining those who came before him did the senator badger or harass the military witnesses or openly impugn the motives of McClellan and his staff.[21] On the other hand, he clearly cultivated the radicals on the committee in such a manner as to confuse even some of his own Democratic party members.[22]

So skillfully had the Tennessean trod the path between supporting the Lincoln administration, beating the drums for a vigorous prosecution of the war, and urging an early invasion of East Tennessee, that when Nashville was evacuated by the rebels he was the person chosen to restore his state to its normal relationship. His selection should be regarded all the more remarkable since his public remarks on the secessionist movement had damned the abolitionists as co-conspirators of the fire-eaters. "One is dissatisfied with the other; one is insulted by the other; and then, to seek revenge, to gratify

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[21]Johnson and McClellan were in firm agreement on the wisdom of the East Tennessee movement. "My own general plans for the prosecution of the war," McClellan complained to an uncooperative Buell, "make the speedy occupation of East Tennessee and its lines of railway matters of absolute necessity." McClellan to Buell, January 6, 1862, OR, Ser. I, VII, 531.

[22]According to one historian, Johnson's "cooperation even extended to the point of asking Ohio Democrats, much to their perplexity, to support Wade for re-election." Moreover the Tennessee plebeian even apparently promised Indiana Republican Congressman Schuyler Colfax's assistance in the canvass of 1862, perhaps "inducing those who have heretofore been Democrats to vote for Republicans." Circumstances would prevent his traveling to Indiana that year but he would redeem his pledge in early 1863, urging a vigorous war policy. That same speaking tour ended in Washington where he reportedly visited his radical colleagues in their working sessions and even assisted them in the preparation of a report critical of McClellan, who was then being promoted as a potential presidential candidate by the Democracy. Williams, Lincoln and the Radicals, 69: Schuyler Colfax to Johnson, July 5, 1862; Nicholas A. Gray to Johnson, March 1, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 541, 164; Williams, "Andrew Johnson," 79-80, 79n.

themselves, they both agree to make war upon the Union that never offended or injured either."[23] That he could manage to work harmoniously with the radicals on the Committee of the Conduct of the War is a further tribute to his considerable political skills.

The Lincoln-Johnson relationship was one of mutual dependence and apparently mutual respect. Both correctly realized that they needed the other. It has been accurately observed by previous historians of the war years that Lincoln and Stanton tended to defer to the military governor.[24] Johnson, for example, showed great skill in exploiting his Washington contacts, using Congressman Horace Maynard, publisher John W. Forney, and others to carry his messages, argue his cases, and secure many advantages for his purposes.[25] Through intermediaries and the telegraph, the Tennessean, although often penned up in Nashville and threatened with almost constant assault from various guerrilla legions, remained closely in touch with Washington. Similarly, Tennessee events were followed eagerly by the president and general public.

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[23]Speech on the Seceding States, February 5-6, 1861, Graf and Haskins, ibid., IV, 236.

[24]See, for example, Hall, Andrew Johnson, 18-31; and passim, and Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 44-45.

[25]Forney, the secretary of the Senate and publisher of the Philadelphia Press and Washington Chronicle, sent reporter Benjamin C. Truman to Tennessee when Johnson was appointed. Truman remained closely tied to the governor, often serving as a confidential agent and relaying dispatches to Washington. See John W. Forney to Johnson, March 4, 1862; Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 178; Benjamin C. Truman to Johnson, November 17, 1862, Johnson Papers.

Upon his return to the nation's capital following his visit to Tennessee, Horace Maynard wrote Johnson, describing his reception in Washington. "The kindness with which I have been welcomed back, & the earnest enquiries made after you & the success of the administration, by men of all parties, illustrates, better than any thing else, the intense earnestness with which the public eye is directed towards our state." Such encouragement was badly needed tonic for the governor, whose difficulties with the military and the rebel elite were beginning to consume his time. Moreover, Maynard described the president and secretary of war as being eager to support the military governor in several ageas, most notably giving the governor temporary command of the troops in the Nashville area and allowing him to appoint individuals to fill the state's now vacant senate seats. Although the latter proposal never materialized and Tennessee remained without representation in the upper chamber until the war's end, the willingness by Lincoln to concede such broad discretion to the military governor ("The Prest. was in favor of the power being exercised: that it existed he expressed no doubt") well illustrates both the ad hoc nature of the chief executive's reconstruction philosophy and his trust of the man in Tennessee.[26]

Newspaperman John W. Forney and his correspondent Benjamin C. Truman were active conduits to the president's office, taking Johnson's side in his struggles with the military and urging Lincoln to support

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[26]Maynard to Johnson, April 24, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 329.

the provisional governor in other endeavors. Consequently, Forney and Truman, both through their newspaper columns and their personal intervention, kept his wishes before the president and the war department. "Gov. Johnson is our great reliance in Tennessee," the president wrote on a packet of documents brought to his office from Nashville by the corpulent Truman, commending them to the attention of Halleck and Stanton. "In the course of conversation with Halleck, Mr. Forney told him that you was head and shoulders above all other men, and should never have to ask for anything the second time," Truman told Johnson, adding "If I had not seen Mr. Forney, I would have made out bad with the President."[27] Despite the high priority often placed on his requests by official Washington, the governor also knew frustrations, especially when his demands conflicted with irreversible military policy.

In the early stages of his appointment when Buell was removing troops from the Nashville area over Johnson's protests (described in an earlier chapter), the governor discovered that military expediency had its own imperatives. There were limitations on Washington's willingness to appease the Tennessean. When Maynard went to Stanton to remonstrate on behalf of the governor and his efforts to prevent the removal of Federal troops from Nashville and vicinity, Stanton was evasive, referring the matter to Halleck. According to the Tennessee congressman, the secretary of war declared that "he could not take the responsibility of interfering with, much less controlling

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[27]Truman to Johnson, November 17, 1862, Johnson Papers.

military operations at a point so remote & in the presence of such an enemy."[28] Lincoln agreed, also explaining to Maynard that the governor should communicate his complaints directly to Halleck. "He is reluctant still to interfere with his commanding Generals while in the field & before the enemy," Maynard declared.[29] However, Johnson would not be silenced. "The very fact of the forces being withdrawn from this locality has inspired secession with insolence & confidence & Union men with distrust as to the power & intention of the Govt to protect and defend them," he fumed. Consequently, the credibility of the restoration process had been compromised. "Had my request been complied with there would have been no Morgan raids through Middle Tennessee & Kentucky[,] no battles at Lebanon."[30]

The preceding should not be interpreted to mean that his requests were ignored. Quite the contrary. Generally, the governor enjoyed the almost complete cooperation of the Lincoln administration, exclusive of the larger details of command structure. Even here we have seen the governor's influences operate on the actions of commanders like Buell, Rosecrans, Thomas, and Sherman. The Lincoln

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[28]Maynard to Johnson, April 20, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 335.

[29]Maynard to Johnson, April 29, 1862, ibid., 348. Lincoln wrote Johnson personally, delicately and gently admonishing him. "Do you not, my good friend, perceive that what you ask is simply to put you in command in the West?" Surely the governor did not want such an assignment. "You only wish to control in your own localities; but this you must know may derange all other posts." Lincoln to Johnson, July 11, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 122.

[30]Johnson to Stanton, May 11, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 378.

government responded quickly and generally affirmatively to soothe, appease, and please the Tennessean, apparently out of a genuine conviction of his intrinsic worth. "The Governor is a true and valuable man--indispensable to us in Tennessee," the president counseled Halleck.[31]

Alarmed by the failure of the Federal army to provide security for Nashville, Johnson pressed the war department for cavalry to shield the city from the rebel marauders who roamed the roads, fields, and woods of the area. Having no mounted troops to spare, Stanton authorized the governor to raise two regiments for three years or for the duration of the war, promising "a premium of 2 dollars for each recruit accepted & one months pay in advance upon the company being mustered."[32] Thereafter the secretary gave the governor almost unlimited authority to raise any number of both cavalry and infantry "for the service of your state," and specifying that the troops' first employment should be in freeing East Tennessee from Confederate rule. Later the governor received even more extensive authority, permitting the formation of ten regiments each of cavalry and ten batteries of artillery, creating an army of 25,000 men to be recruited

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[31] Lincoln to Halleck, July 11, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 122.

[32] Johnson to Stanton, June 21, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 495; Stanton to Johnson, June 21, 1862, Johnson Papers. A measure of the military governor's standing in official Washington can be seen in the celerity with which his telegrams and dispatches were answered. It was a rare exception when he did not get a quick reply, almost within a day or two, and often less.

from Tennessee and even other states.[33] Such authority was unprecedented and almost certainly resented by other governors, although troops raised in other states by Johnson's agents could be counted toward the various governors' assigned quotas.[34] Even though this extraordinary authority was later rescinded, it clearly indicated the willingness of the Lincoln administration to assist the Tennessee plebeian in his efforts to reassert Federal control over his home state and section.

In the course of the governor's efforts to fill his regiments Lincoln heard an interesting rumor. "I am told you have at least thought of raising a negro military force." The possibility was an intoxicating prospect to the president who needed additional troops to fill the bloody maw of war and a southerner of influence and consequence to endorse his emancipation program. Andrew Johnson would be an ideal and credible figure to lead the way.

> In my opinion the country now needs no specific thing so much as some man of your ability, and position, to go to this work. When I speak of your position, I mean that of an eminent citizen of a slave-state, and himself a slave-holder. The colored population is the great available, and yet unavailed of, force, for restoring the Union. The bare sight of fifty thousand armed, and drilled black soldiers upon the banks of the Mississippi, would end the rebellion at once. And who doubts that we can present that sight, if we but take hold in earnest? If you have been thinking of it please do not dismiss the thought.[35]

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[33]Stanton to Johnson, July 16, August 1, 1862, Johnson Papers.

[34]Stanton to Johnson, March 19, 1863, Stanton Papers; Stanton to Johnson, March 28, April 15, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[35]Lincoln to Johnson, March 26, 1863, Lincoln Papers. Benjamin C. Truman, who often presumed to speak for the military

The president's comments reflected his growing preoccupation with the underlying cause of the civil war, the anomaly of slavery in a democratic society. And although it would be several months still before the Tennessean pronounced slavery dead and embraced emancipation for his own state, clearly the military governor was undergoing a long transformation in his attitudes.

In September, 1861, the then Senator Johnson proclaimed his views on slavery to a Kentucky audience and articulated his thesis that the institution had been safer in the Union. "I am a Southern man, sharing the prejudices of my section, and I am no abolitionist," he conceded, "but I tell you, my fellow countrymen, that Secession has done more harm today than all the Abolitionists in the country put together since we were a nation."[36] The Tennessee Unionist's argument was supported by friendly counsel from Washington, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, a Johnson ally and political supporter, who warned ominously that Charles Sumner and men of his persuasion were denying the existence of Union sentiment among the southerners. "It must begin to be obvious to them that the Secessionists have done more for Abolition than any body else & unless the people of the South mean to suit their conduct to the purposes of these men they will Shortly change it."[37]

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governor, rejected the idea, asserting that Johnson expected the rebellion to be crushed by white troops. Nashville Press, May 5, 1863; see also George W. Ansley to Johnson, April 27, 1863, Military Governor's Papers.

[36]Speech at Newport, Kentucky, September 2, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 3-4.

[37]Montgomery Blair to Johnson, April 29, 1862, ibid., 347-48.

Although the governor would never shed his racial prejudices and indeed had owned slaves himself, his interest in defending the institution began to wane during the summer of 1862, at a time when the capital was under almost constant seige and the town filling with refugees and runaway and abandoned contrabands. He could see the peculiar institution evaporating before his very eyes. Perhaps he recognized that the greatest danger to slavery was the confusion and dislocation caused by war: the absent master; the careless or non-existent overseer; the disrupted routines; the lack of patrols; the seductions of the army camps; the desolated farms and plundered plantations; and always the intoxicating dream of freedom and the lure of the untraveled road and the untrammeled day. During a Fourth of July oration that year, he apparently gave the first real public indication that he thought that the institution was becoming expendable. "I believe indeed that the Union is the only protection of slavery--its sole guarantee," he proclaimed, "but if you persist in forcing the issue of slavery against the Government, I say in the face of Heaven, 'Give me my Government, and let the negroes go!'"[38]

Up to November, at least, the embattled governor remained under almost constant seige. In the midst of great confusion and hardship the Tennessee Unionist and erstwhile slaveowner took one long and last hard look at the future of the peculiar institution. Invested by a rebel army, the streets barricaded, rifle pits and gun emplacements ringing the capitol hill, Nashville was filling with the flotsam

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[38]Speech at Nashville, July 4, 1862, ibid., 536.

and backwash of the southern Confederacy at high tide, the runaway and abandoned servants of the defiant rebels, awaiting the Gotterdämmerung. Was there still a chance to preserve the institution? Could slavery still survive the cataclysm?

Samuel C. Mercer, the radical editor of the Nashville Union (which was subsidized by the military governor), argued that slavery was already doomed by the war. On November 27, 1862, his editorial predicted that the splendid plantations of the Tennessee rebels would be stripped of the unlettered "half-savage, woolly-headed, coal-black, ragged Africans" and replaced by a northern "multitude of industrious, thinking, well-clad, educated, newspaper-reading, church and school-going, white farmers, able and willing to serve the State in peace and in war."[39] Although Mercer's prediction of the death of slavery was still slightly premature and his expectations of an influx of industrious carpetbaggers perhaps more idealistic than realistic, that fall had brought a great threat to the future of slavery. Whereas radicals had been impatiently waiting for some action to force the president's hand, most Tennessee Unionists were stunned by the consequences arising from a confused encounter far away in Maryland along the banks of a meandering creek called Antietam.

McClellan's lackluster victory, halting Lee's invasion of Maryland, carried Lincoln beyond his original preferences involving gradual, conpensated emancipation and colonization to a decision of dubious legality, questionable practical effect, but profound social,

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[39]Nashville Union, November 27, 1862.

economic, and moral implications. Issued on September 22, 1862, in a preliminary form, the Emancipation Proclamation would confront the loyal slaveholders of Tennessee with some foreboding concerns. William B. Campbell, John Lellyett, and other conservative Unionists immediately recognized the meaning that Lincoln's executive order could have for Tennessee. Johnson's reaction was characteristically blunt. "Damn the negroes! I am fighting those traitorous aristocrats, their masters!" However, the governor joined Campbell and a large number of other Tennessee Unionists in successfully persuading the president to exempt the state from his order.[40]

The Tennesseans secured the exclusion of their state from the final form of the proclamation (which asserted that the slaves in those areas remaining in rebellion on January 1, 1863, would be forever declared free), by arguing curiously that the rebels had prevented a fair canvass on secession on June 8, 1861. "We earnestly desire another fair and unbiased vote and in the present condition of our state it is impossible for such [a] vote to be taken." In other words, since large portions of the state were under rebel control, a true vote on the question of Union or secession was impossible. To be more precise, Tennessee should not be designated as a state in rebellion due to the fact that the rebels controlled

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[40]Russell Houston, Jordan Stokes, Allen A. Hall, and others to Lincoln, December 4, 1862, Lincoln Papers; George Thomas Palmer, A Conscientious Turncoat: The Story of John M. Palmer (New Haven, Conn., 1941), 90.

most of the state![41] Nevertheless, Lincoln agreed, thereby conceding another point to Johnson and his fellow Unionists.

The Emancipation Proclamation, however, left the loyal coalition shaken and confused. Eventually Lincoln's executive order would divide the already uneasy alliance of War Democrats, old-line Whigs, Free Soilers, and radicals that constituted the loyal Tennesseans. "We are one of a large number who believe that the inaugeration [sic] of the rebellion was the death-blow of slavery," one Union organ conceded. "But we do believe it injudicious to continually prate about the abolition of slavery." Indeed many still believed that abolitionism and Unionism were incompatible. "We look upon these men who are continually harping about the negro as little better than the Copperheads."[42] Lincoln's decision to use emancipation as a war measure undercut the arguments of southern Unionists like Johnson that the conflict was not a war against slavery but a crusade to preserve the republic, and it negated their long-held contention that the peculiar institution was safer in the Union than in a cotton Confederacy. Consequently, the war would enter a new phase and pose new problems for the provisional government. However, according to an admirer, Andrew Johnson was not disheartened in the fall of 1862. "Cut off from all communication with the North, he seems a

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[41] Houston, Stokes, Hall, and others to Lincoln, December 4, 1862, Lincoln Papers.

[42] Nashville Press, May 25, 1863.

man for the times, whose energies rise to meet the emergencies, instead of sinking at the first shock."[43]

However, the reluctant Rosecrans' victory at Stones River allowed the Federal perimeter to be expanded southward, enveloping Murfreesboro and securing additional miles of railroad. Some time earlier rail connections had been re-established with Louisville and beyond. At long last Johnson had an opportunity to leave Nashville, explore the mood of the North, and discuss such matters as the future of slavery with interested political and military leaders beyond his state. When an invitation came to speak on behalf of the Union in Indianapolis, he responded affirmatively, no doubt intending to test the temper of the people on a variety of issues, including emancipation.

With the pressure now shifting to redefine the role of the African in southern society, William R. Hurley, John Lellyett, William B. Campbell, and persons of similar outlook began to entertain great doubts about the wisdom of cleaving to the Johnson-Lincoln administration. Lellyett, one of the leading critics of the military governor, called upon the rebels to give up the war before it was too late.

> Let those of the people of Tennessee who have been released from the thraldom of the rebellion, take the lead in a movement to restore the Constitution. Speak out, and your friends in the far South will hear and take courage. . . . It seems to me that we have no other hope left us to save our

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[43]Cincinnati Commercial, quoted in Nashville Union, October 25, 1862.

> country from despotism, than a general and concerted rally for the restoration of the authority of the Constitution over our whole land.[44]

Clearly he was echoing the fears of compatriots, observing the steady rise of radicalism, the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, the confiscation acts, emancipation, and now consideration of Negro troops. He seemed to be calling for the assistance of his former Union allies, men like Joseph C. Guild, William G. Harding, Neill S. Brown, and others who had originally opposed secession until caught up in the hysteria of the moment. Should the conservative Unionists find an arena in which they could employ the support of the former secessionists of the caliber of a William G. Harding, the resulting alliance could be a formidable political fusion. Although no overt evidence exists of such a plan or conspiracy to join forces with former rebels in a new political combination against the legion of Lincoln and Johnson, the conservatives surely objected to policies that would not welcome back the disaffected secessionists. "We are forced to admit that they erred greatly, have sinned gr[i]evously against a kind, good government, in rushing madly and thoughtlessly into rebellion, but denunciation will never win them back," a correspondent calling himself "Nashville" observed. "It is not usual to make a man your friend by denouncing him as a cutthroat, thief, or as an ignorant outlaw," he insisted. Warning that the

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[44] Nashville Dispatch, June 16, 1863. With this article bearing the initials "J.L.," Lellyett moved into the forefront of the local opposition to Johnson. He would become a leading figure in the movement to embarrass the Lincoln administration by using the elective process in 1863 and 1864.

abolitionists who seemed to be in the ascendancy in the Johnson regime were making emancipation the new test of loyalty, the conservative argued that such an ideology was foreign to the sentiments of his fellow Tennesseans. "We are willing that they should be abolitionists, but we beg of them in the name of patriotism not to throw obstacles in our way, in our attempts to develop Union sentiment in the State."[45]

Lellyett, Campbell, and the others who expressed opposition to the recent resolutions of the Nashville Union Club, repeated essentially the same argument and pointed out that the radicalism of its principles would deprive the Union movement of the service and participation of those who renounced their ties to the Confederacy.[46] Thus the questions of lenity toward the former Confederates, their place in the new order of a restored Tennessee, and the role of the black in war and peace were already emerging as divisive elements, even before the state had been cleared of the rebel army.

Observing the struggle from Washington, William R. Hurley bemoaned the course of recent events. "I think that I see a purpose among those who call themselves loyal in Tennessee to take strong abolition grounds." Such a path would "alienate our people & prostrate the union men in Tennessee."[47] John Lellyett continued to speak out publicly for the conservatives, pleading for an accommodation with the

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[45]Louisville Journal, March 23, 1863.

[46]See Nashville Press, May 14, 16, 1863.

[47]William R. Hurley to Campbell, July 7, 1863, Campbell Papers.

reluctant secessionists and urging that the victims of deception should not be punished alongside their betrayers. Using a thinly disguised nom de plume on a letter published in a paper generally friendly to the governor, he suggested that secession had created extraordinary circumstances:

> The press, the telegraph and the mails were taken possession of by the rebel authorities and their revolutionary committees; the truth was shut out from the masses of our people, and all manner of falsehood was circulated with wonderful celerity, to mislead and poison the public mind. No effort or art was spared to deceive the ignorant, to over-awe the timid, and to commit the unwary to the revolutionary cause by the commission of some overt act of rebellion. Men's names were placed upon revolutionary committees without their consent. Others were induced to join military companies upon false pretenses--for the defense of the city or community against public disorders or perchance servile insurrections--for the defence of the States, in this time of general confusion, against all enemies.[48]

Such persons should be regarded "with sorrow and not in anger," he insisted.[49]

Although Lellyett was quickly putting distance between himself and the radical elements in the Johnson group, he allowed his name to be used in a call for a convention, addressed to "those of our fellow citizens who desire to maintain the State government in connection with the Federal Union, as it stood prior to the rebellion and the war." Among the other sponsors were a number of Johnson's allies and appointees, including Maynard, Brownlow, East, Fowler, and others. Lellyett had apparently cooperated only with the intention of having the convention packed with conservative delegates, urging his friend

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[48] Nashville Press, May 19, 1863.

[49] Ibid.

Campbell to use his influence to bring men sharing their views to the meeting in Nashville in early July. "Let us therefore be on hand in time, and bring as many of the right kind of men with us."[50]

The convention assembled on July 1, with William G. Brownlow taking the chair temporarily, the various "delegates" signing an oath to support the government and the Tennessee constitution; dealing with some thorny procedural questions of representation, voting, and credentials in an ad hoc irregular organization (some simply registered as "citizens," being understandably loath to describe themselves as "delegates"); and appointing safe administration men to the various committees.[51] John Hugh Smith chaired the committee, nominating the permanent officers; and Parson Brownlow headed the committee on Federal relations. That committee immediately received a series of resolutions offered by Horace Maynard, declaring that all actions of the rebel state government were "unauthorized, the work of usurpation, and therefore inoperative and void" and calling for an election for a new legislature and "a Provisional Governor" to serve until a successor was elected by the people, at the next biennial election. In committee Maynard's resolutions were re-drafted, dropping the call for the election of a provisional governor and adding a hearty endorsement of

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[50]Nashville Dispatch, June 23, 1863; Lellyett to Campbell or F. H. Gordon, June 27, 1863, Campbell Papers.

[51]Unless otherwise noted, the following material is taken from the Nashville Dispatch, July 2-7, 1863, and the Nashville Press, July 2-8, 1863.

Andrew Johnson's policy as military governor when the resolutions were reported out of committee on the next day, July 2.

At this point the convention began an unanticipated debate on the merits of Johnson's military government. One speaker was disappointed that the committee had omitted all mention of electing a governor and other state officers. "He did not come to endorse Governor Johnson, or any other man, however, much he might approve of his policy," asserting that he favored "electing all the officers, from the Governor down to the lowest constable in the State." Later John Lellyett also declared his opposition to the resolution which endorsed the military government, citing as his reason "there being a great variety of opinions on that subject." Nashville lawyer and city councilman Manson M. Brien demurred. When he proclaimed his support of "the President as a whole: all he has done, all he is doing, and all he is going to do," the convention broke into applause. He concluded by endorsing Johnson and all the resolutions presented. Another Johnson partisan, postmaster A.V.S. Lindsley, opposed holding an election for governor until East Tennessee had been cleared of rebel armies, prompting another outburst of applause.

The debate over the office of military governor took up the better part of two days' sessions. In the midst of their deliberations, news came of Lee's defeat at Gettysburg, but the implications of that victory did not prevent the growing schism in the convention and in the Union ranks from continuing to find expression. On July 4, an old-time Whig lawyer and former chancery and circuit court judge, John S. Brien,

affirmed his opposition to proscribing or coercing those who renounced secession. Although he stated his support for the military governor, he nonetheless remained in favor of seeking the assistance and support of those willing to return to their former allegiance. "We must bring back our erring brethren," he declared, "I have no ill will toward any section, and I therefore desire that all shall have an opportunity--nay, that they shall be invited to return to their allegiance, and their functions as citizens." When Maynard protested that surely Brien knew hundreds who had perjured themselves in swearing their allegiance to the United States with no intention of keeping the oath, the judge denied that he knew anyone. In favor of punishing the guilty but sparing the innocent, Brien counseled discretion. "I know men who have aided and encouraged the rebellion, on whose loyalty, at this time, I would stake my life, my property, my reputation, and the honor and reputation of my family," he contended.

Although the radicals and Johnson supporters would carry the day, the convention revealed the growing disunity within the loyalist camp. Several of the self-appointed delegates at this self-constituted gathering grumbled at the failure to advocate more stringent measures, emancipation, disfranchisement of the disloyal, and even summary executions. One delegate, advocating hanging all the leading rebels without "Judge or jury," boasted that "he was a black-flag man up to the handle." Another damned the politicians and the preachers, the former for leading the country into war and the latter for lying so much that they believed their own lies. He castigated the rich slave-owners amidst great cheering and applause and complained that a law

benefitting the poor men of Tennessee had not been passed in the last thirty years.[52] And so it went. Despite John Lellyett's efforts to prevent the resolution praising Johnson from passing, the convention overwhelmingly endorsed the military governor, easily brushing aside the few nay-sayers.[53]

Yet a great break had been revealed. The Union party now was splintered into two hostile camps. One faction wrapped its amalgamation of radical Democrats and Henry Clay Whigs in the colors of Old Glory and rallied to the martial call of Lincoln and Johnson. The other wing, composed of political chameleons like Emerson Etheridge, disaffected Whigs of the Campbell stature, and opportunists like John Lellyett, began exploring the ideological No Man's Land between the loyalists and the secessionists, urging reconciliation for the renounced rebels and warning that continued rebellion would be catastrophic to the state. Emancipation, the use of black troops, the future role of the freed slaves, the issue of elections, and questions about the provisional government, including Andrew Johnson, himself, would emerge as the catalytic agents to promote the division in the Union cause.[54]

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[52]The individual, a Nashville resident, petitioned Johnson for a commission to raise a regiment of black soldiers, alleging that "our city is infested with a large number of contrabands, many of whom are without employment & in their present condition are a festering sore upon the body politic." John Carper to Johnson, July 17, 1863, Military Governor's Papers.

[53]See Horace H. Harrison to Johnson and enclosed resolution, July 13, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[54]See, for example, James B. Bingham to Johnson, August 11, 1863, ibid.

It was during this period that the Union movement entered its most critical phase since Buell's mishandled campaign almost snuffed out loyalists' hopes in the late summer of 1862. The emancipation question refused to die despite Lincoln's exclusion of Tennessee from his executive order. With Rosecrans showing more ability to hold positions won than his predecessor, the Union coalition was given the momentary opportunity to review the larger issues of the war in an environment now highly charged by the continuous debate over the future place of the slave. The new problems raised by the Emancipation Proclamation represented the latest in a series of political shocks sustained by the Tennessee Unionists: first, the election of Lincoln; then, secession; next, the war with its lost opportunities; and finally, the emancipation issue coming with victory and peace still uncertain. Could the grouping of antipodes survive the strain?

Acutely conscious of the doubtful legality of his position, Johnson had tried desperately to establish the semblance of a proper state government, having appointed Edward H. East secretary of state, Joseph H. Fowler comptroller, and Horace Maynard attorney-general, soon after he first arrived in 1862. He later caused the selection of loyalists for several other posts, like Alvan C. Gillem as adjutant general.[55] Occasionally, he appointed other individuals for special assignments. For example, Connally F. Trigg, Edmund Cooper, and William B. Campbell participated in efforts to secure the release

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[55]Hall, Andrew Johnson, 42; Nashville Press, July 18, 1863.

of those rebel soldiers held in northern prisons, willing to return to their old allegiances. And he even found a sinecure for his old friend, Sam Milligan, whom East Tennessee enemies had left almost penniless. Yet the fact remained that by the summer of 1863, there was no elected governor and no loyal state legislature; and except for the Federal Court, the criminal court, and local tribunals, in the Nashville area, almost every other office was vacant or still held by rebels.

Conservatives like William B. Campbell, John Lellyett, and Emerson Etheridge, the former Whig congressman and recently clerk of the House, began to inveigh against the radical wing of the Union party in Tennessee. Perhaps unwilling to raise the firestorm that he knew a call for emancipation in Tennessee would bring, Governor Johnson remained momentarily silent on the emancipation issue and did not immediately repeat his spread eagle pronouncements that had been received with great ovations in the cities of the North and East.[56] Indeed, for several weeks his most conspicuous act was a brief inspection tour with General Rosecrans, visiting the field hospitals, convalescent camps, and military installations in Nashville.[57]

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[56]Although his first arrival in the sullen citadel of secession was perhaps necessarily but embarrassingly inconspicuous, his supporters turned out in good form on the evening that he returned from his trip this time and gave him an enthusiastic welcome, complete with military escort and honor guard composed of his beloved East Tennesseans. However, he made no public reference to the slave issue. Nashville Dispatch, May 31, 1863.

[57]Louisville Journal, July 18, 1863.

Meanwhile, the politically nimble Etheridge began cutting his ties to the Johnson-Lincoln administration.[58] On May 18, 1863, he rebuffed a request from a group of Memphis citizens to speak to their organization, which apparently had a radical reputation. "I do not remember that I ever had the honor of a personal acquaintance with any one of you, although, in former times, I knew many of the leading citizens of Memphis," Etheridge asserted, "among whom are not a few who are still ardently in favor of a restoration of the Constitution." He singled out the Lincoln government and Johnson's supporters in Nashville for special bitterness. In a reference to the Nashville Union Club and the governor's organ, the Nashville Union, the Tennessee conservative denounced them as an abolition society and an abolition newspaper, observing sarcastically that both were tireless in their efforts to persuade the people of Middle Tennessee "to cease all further opposition to the wise, gentle, and constitutional rule of our distinguished Chief Magistrate."[59]

At the same time Etheridge was scheming to embarrass Johnson and his supporters. Although the unsettled countryside and lack of Union control in great portions of the state, especially in most areas outside of Memphis and upper Middle Tennessee, made elections

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[58]Etheridge enjoyed a long and checkered career, migrating across the ideological map from Whig, American, and Democrat to Republican. McBride and Robison, Biographical Directory, I, 236.

[59]Herman Belz, "The Etheridge Conspiracy of 1863: A Projected Conservative Coup," Journal of Southern History, XXXVI (1970), 556; Emerson Etheridge to Washington Union Club of Memphis, May 18, 1863, Louisville Journal, June 10, 1863.

risky or impossible, there was legitimate pressure on the governor to open courts, appoint sheriffs and other officials, and even hold elections in the areas under Federal control.[60] In fact, in response to Lincoln's urging, Johnson had already carried out elections in the ninth and tenth congressional districts in West Tennessee only to have them interrupted by Forrest's raids in the area.[61] Consequently, the results were an embarrassment to the Lincoln regime, demonstrating the fragility of Federal control. Capitalizing on the dissatisfaction with Johnson and Lincoln over the slavery issue and other concerns, Etheridge and his fellow conservatives decided to "run" William B. Campbell for governor in the election which would have been normally held on August 4, according to the Tennessee constitution. Meanwhile, a number of loyal citizens petitioned the military governor for "a chance to show ourselves such by voting for loyal men for our state officers at the coming August Election," desiring to be represented in the next congress and senate.[62]

With the Confederate army still in Tennessee and guerrillas almost always roaming at will even within the Federal lines, Johnson,

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[60]B. D. Nabers to Johnson, February 5, 1863; T. L. Sullivan to Johnson, February 16, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[61]"Follow law, and forms of law as far as convenient; but at all events get the expression of the largest number of people possible," the president directed. See Lincoln to U. S. Grant, Johnson, and others, October 21, 1863, Basler, Works of Lincoln, V, 470-71. Johnson to Lincoln, January 11, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XX, pt. 2, p. 317; "Certification of Congressional Election, January 10, 1863," House Report No. 46, 37 Cong., 3 sess., 6.

[62]Coffee County Citizens to Johnson, July 25, 1863, Johnson Papers.

perhaps also smarting from his previous experiences with elections, determined not to hold the regular biennial elections. This decision played into the conservatives' hands, who were hoping to use Campbell's candidacy to build a powerful anti-administration coalition. "You have the power, if you have the will," one correspondent told the ex-governor, "to lead a powerful Conservative party in the Senate."[63] Expectedly, Johnson took no more note of the Campbell challenge than he did a similar effort by the Confederates to choose a successor for Isham G. Harris. Since there were no county officers or election paraphernalia, both elections were ludicrous in their bald efforts to discredit the military governor.

Emerson Etheridege boldly presented the results to Lincoln, claiming that the Campbell candidacy had been victorious despite Johnson's attempts to obstruct the constitutional processes. "The voters, however, of several counties, cast their votes for General William B. Campbell for Governor," he claimed, insisting that "nearly every Union citizen of Tennessee" wanted him to be inaugurated in the manner prescribed by the state constitution. "Gen. Campbell is willing to assume the duties and responsibilities of the office, but he is not willing to make the attempt, if thereby, he will incur opposition from Your Excellency." Lincoln pointedly disregarded Etheridge's conspiracy to embarrass the provisional governor, and a Nashville paper denied that Campbell had even received the most

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[63]William R. Hurley to Campbell, July 7, 1863, Campbell Papers.

votes in the two or three counties that his partisans claimed held elections.[64]

> The fact that this movement is headed by the author of a violent attack upon the policy of the President, very clearly indicates the spirit which instigated it, and that certain parties are resolved to move heaven and earth to seize upon the territory of Tennessee, after it shall have been wrested from the rebellion by the dearest blood of the republic, and bring it again under pro-slave domination.[65]

Although differences based on economics and political questions by necessity were submerged during the constant efforts to prevent the rebels from recapturing Nashville and the salient held by the Federal army in 1862, it is clear that Johnson's northern tour represented a watershed in the political geography of Union politics in Tennessee. He returned to the state with greatly augmented powers and support given him by the Lincoln administration. His increasing flirtation with radical solutions to the many problems of slavery cemented even stronger ties to the northern Republicans.

As a pragmatist, Johnson was probably stimulated by several realizations. The military governor surely could recognize the death rattle of slavery in the growing population of contrabands within the Federal lines. Moreover, the northern tour probably also convinced

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[64]Hall, Andrew Johnson, 99-100; Emerson Etheridge to Lincoln, September 28, 1863, Lincoln Papers; Nashville Union, October 1, 8, 1863. Etheridge, being acting clerk of the House of Representatives, also attempted a bold parliamentary coup in December, 1863, seeking to invalidate the credentials of several Republicans from loyal states and replace them with conservatives from border and rebel states to give the Democratic coalition control of the lower house. See Belz, "Etheridge Conspiracy," 549-67.

[65]Nashville Union, October 1, 1863.

the wily Tennessean of the political strength of the radicals, since he had already dealt with them in the Senate and on the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. Given his skill at reading the handwriting on the wall, he surely also understood the shallow loyalty for him personally among Campbell and his associates. Knowledge of Campbell's continued interest in conciliation and persistent rumors of even stronger sympathies toward the rebels were to prove troublesome later to the Middle Tennessee banker when he entertained serious national political ambitions.[66] Although dismayed and disturbed by the schism in the Union ranks, Johnson must have also felt a sense of wounded personal pride. Not only did his political enemies challenge his administration but they chose to do so when his national stature perhaps had never been higher and his standing with the Lincoln administration reaching new heights. Yet he could take comfort in the knowledge that his enemies on the right had unmasked themselves. There would be now no need to extend the Campbell faction further political sinecures or military appointments. The military governor, perhaps, also would be consoled with the realization that the conservatives had done even greater damage to their own cause. Now they would be damned as

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[66]Apparently referring to the selection of Johnson over Campbell in 1862 and blaming the decision on the radicals, William R. Hurley bemoaned the machinations of the antislavery forces. "You have already suffered at the vile attacks of the abolition clique. Your conciliatory manly policy would have saved Tennessee and by this time thousands in the state would have been firm unionists who are now secessionists. The foul breath of abolitionists hinted that your sympathies were too strong for the individual secessionists. This is a vile and mean assault upon a man who has the confidence of Tennessee Unionists above any man in the state." Hurley to Campbell, July 7, 1863, Campbell Papers.

appeasers, coddlers of traitors, and "rose water" patriots. With the Campbell clan plotting against him and urging his removal, Andrew Johnson could not very well preach leniency and a return to the old order unless he wished to make strange bedfellows of those who now sought to discredit him. At this shock of recognition, his reconstruction theories, by necessity, would undergo a painful reassessment. With the Union camp deep in disarray, the military governor moved to rally the thinning ranks of loyalists about him and continue the fight against the rebellion, prompted now by an even more desperate fury.

Worried confidants advised him that "the revival of old party prejudices" and old party feuds were threatening the Union party from the mountains of East Tennessee to the rich, water-born soil of the western reaches of the state. There Etheridge and his fellows conspired against the governor, and other critics complained petulantly that he cared nothing for the people west of the Tennessee River, having not yet redeemed a pledge to visit Memphis.[67] With the rebels still lodged defiantly in his beloved Appalachian homeland, the Greeneville politico decided to grasp the nettle of slavery and thereby destroy the last vestige of the rebellion. The decision would insure that the polarity already emerging between Johnson and the pro-slavery, anti-Lincoln wing of the Union party in Tennessee would be absolute and irrevocable.

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[67] Samuel Morrow to Johnson, August 14, 1863; James B. Bingham to Johnson, August 11, 1863, Johnson Papers.

"I am for a white man's government, and for a free, intelligent, white constituency, instead of a negro aristocracy," he proclaimed in a speech at Franklin, Tennessee, on August 22, in the midst of the controversy over Etheridge's efforts to dislodge him as governor. "Cotton and negroes have ruled here in the South," he asserted, "they are rulers no longer." Observing that once every topic could be discussed freely, "except Slavery," he warned that whenever open discourse on any institution was forbidden then liberty was threatened. "The Government is above cotton and negroes," he warned. "I am for my government with or without slavery," he insisted, adding the now familiar disclaimer, "but if either the Government or slavery must perish, I say give me the Government and let the negroes go." However, Johnson obviously had migrated far beyond his highly qualified remarks that dazzled his northern audiences and gave pause to Tennessee slave holders. On familiar grounds he denied that the economic investment that slavery required, the security system that was necessitated, and the supervision that it needed were worth maintaining the institution, especially in comparison to free labor. In fact should the slaves be freed "in less than ten years they will be more productive than they are now."[68]

Slaveowners would be disturbed and confused, radicals delighted. Still Johnson had not yet pronounced the unspeakable heresy of

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[68]Speech at Franklin, August 22, 1863, from unidentified newspaper clipping in the Johnson-Bartlett Collection, Greeneville, Tennessee; hereafter cited as Johnson Collection; see also Nashville Union, August 25, 1863.

abolitionism. Although he may have toyed with the idea of emancipation and black troops, if one were to judge by Lincoln and those seeking to lead the Negro regiments, the Tennessean had not quite cut the Gordian Knot. However, the governor's patience ended before the month was out. In an informal speech on the evening of Saturday, August 29, the former tailor and slaveholder renounced his final ties to involuntary servitude and closed an era in the history of his state. He told a large, impromptu gathering which had assembled at the capitol in celebration of the recapture of Fort Sumter by the Federals that slavery must be destroyed.

> Slavery was a cancer on our society and the scalpel of the statesman should be used not simply to pare away the exterior and leave the roots to propagate the disease anew, but to remove it altogether. Let us destroy the cause of our domestic dissentions and this bloody civil war. It is neither wise nor just to compromise with an evil so gigantic. He avowed himself unequivocally for the removal of slavery; the sooner it can be effected the better. Some inconveniences might, most likely would follow, temporarily, but these would be more than compensated, by the grand impulse given to all our interests by the substitution of free for slave labor. He was for immediate emancipation, if he could get it, if this could not be obtained he was for gradual emancipation; but emancipation at all events. . . . He believed slavery was a curse and he wanted to see it wiped out without delay. We would be stronger, richer, happier and more prosperous, as soon as this was done.[69]

Although Johnson's conversion to emancipation was an important turning point, it has been noted that the legal restraints preventing precipitant action against the status of slavery were quite formidable. One scholar pointed out that only by passing a proposed constitutional amendment in two consecutive general assemblies and then submitting it

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[69] Ibid., September 1, 1863.

to the people in a popular referendum could slavery be legally abolished in Tennessee under normal circumstances.[70] Indeed, the military governor anticipated surprisingly few changes in the status of the freedmen aside from the destruction of their bonds. "You must go to work and depend upon yourselves, and live by your own industry," he insisted. Disturbed by the squalid contraband camps but still opposed to using military service as an outlet for their labor, "I have thought it was better to set these negroes to work, paying them wages, than to make soldiers of them, because a soldier's life is a lazy one," he contended; "but by setting the negroes to work, we will give them an idea of contracts, and when the rebellion is over, they will be in a better condition to take care of themselves than if they were put into camps."[71]

He counseled against dividing up the plantations, pointing to the growing practice of hiring former slaves through contracts and paying wages for their labor. "If the rebellion was all settled" the Tennessee chief executive declared, "I think a large portion of the servants would go right back, if they were stimulated by the offer of fair wages." Clearly the governor anticipated no radical changes in the labor system aside from the abolition of slavery. Instead he

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[70]Cimprich, Slavery Amidst Civil War, 236.

[71]Testimony on the Condition of Negroes, November 23, 1863, RG 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917; Cimprich, Slavery Amidst Civil War, 236-37. Johnson testified before a commission appointed by Stanton to study the condition and circumstances of the "recently emancipated freedmen of the United States." See "Final Report of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission to the Secretary of War," Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 53, 38 Cong., 1 sess., 25, and passim.

foresaw laws covering the care of orphans, vagrancy, and "improper assemblies," and "the time would come when black boys, as well as whites, would be put to apprenticeships." Having been an apprentice himself, he felt such an arrangement might be extremely beneficial.[72]

At one point, he observed with great insight that the South's wealth had been overemphasized. Noting that a non-slaveholder and a slaveowner often suffered from the same economic misfortunes and struggled under similar burdens of debt, the governor, sometimes perceived as the scourge of the "scrub aristocracy," insisted that the large slaveholder was "just about as poor as the other man." Indeed, the economic blight of slavery would be removed in Johnson's view by the resort to free labor. "My idea is, that with proper management, free labor can be more profitable than slave, in a very few years." As for the former slave, "if they have the talents and enterprise in them to rise, let them come," he asserted.[73] Thus the plebeian pronounced the end of slavery and the dawn of a new day. Or did he?

It is clear from a careful reading of his testimony that the former tailor intended no social revolution or large role for the Federal government in dealing with the aftermath of slavery. He expected the former bondsman to take his place in the economic order, altering his condition only by the passage from involuntary servitude to free labor. "The idea of freedom is not to do nothing; you must go to work," he would counsel the freedmen. "We have not brought

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[72] Testimony, November 23, 1863.

[73] Ibid. This writer is indebted to Dr. John V. Cimprich, Jr., for much of the following material on Johnson and the slavery issue. See Cimprich, Slavery Amidst Civil War, 236, and passim.

you away from your masters," he admitted, "but we are not going to send you back." Shying away from a discussion of confiscation, he stepped carefully around the various pitfalls on the subject in typical Johnsonian fashion, offering the radicals a tantalizing morsel here and the conservatives a comforting bone there. In response to a query on the subject, the governor conceded that confiscation had been a great concern. "We have been talking about that here, too," he offered. Predicting that "a good deal of property" would be seized at some unspecified time in the future, the Tennessee Unionist professed to be in favor of such action if legal processes were followed and only after "the whole thing is settled," meaning the war.[74] Thus the military governor, often seemingly so intemperate on the stump, cautiously eschewed the more radical approaches to the problems created by the collapse of slavery. Johnson cleverly pronounced himself in favor of confiscation but also urged delay and strict adherence to legal procedures, a distinction that some might not notice.

It should be further observed that the political heir to Andrew Jackson hardly encouraged the intrusion of the Federal government into the social and economic affairs of his beloved state. Being a philosophical disciple of Old Hickory's theories of self-reliance, laissez-faire, and states rights, he would have scarcely endorsed more purgative measures. Convinced at last of the fatality of the peculiar institution, Johnson rejected the state suicide theories

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[74] Testimony, November 23, 1863.

of Charles Sumner and his compeers.[75] The Tennessean urged Lincoln to steer clear of the radical designs on the southern states, declaring that "there is no good reason now for destroying the states to bring about the destruction of slavery."[76] He believed that the war had been responsible for the death of slavery, but he was further convinced that its destructive force should be confined to that one institution. Although he would engage in some bombastic threats and rhetorical speculations later, philosophically, the Jacksonian remained wedded to the traditions and institutions of his youth. Aside from grudging acceptance of war-born abolition, Andrew Johnson remained camped outside the radicals' bivouac.

What accounts for the conversion? Why did a former slaveholder gradually embrace the heretical imperatives of the Yankee abolitionists? Almost certainly Johnson understood that his decision to accept the death of slavery would cast him beyond the mainstream of his southern contemporaries. Philosophically, he had embarked upon a voyage of unknown destination in the company of strangers. Why would he now

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[75] Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens, and fellow radicals contended that the rebellion constituted a complete alteration in the relationship between the secessionist states and the Union, analogous to state suicide and a reversion to territorial status. However, some of Johnson's own supporters also accepted the concept of territorial status for Tennessee. One Nashville group identifying itself as the National Union League of America, Council No. 2, consisting of persons of German extraction, asked that "the Territorial government of Tennessee remain in the hands of our able and patriotic military governor . . . and that the territorial government be continued until ample proof is afforded of the loyalty of the people." See A. S. Jourdan to Lincoln, December 8, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[76] Johnson to Montgomery Blair, November 24, 1863, ibid.

accept abolition after decades of defending the peculiar institution? The answer is complex and not easily forthcoming. However, to understand the Tennessean's motivation one must also comprehend the political milieu in which he operated. For 1863 had been a pivotal year not only for Andrew Johnson but also for the nation.

After the bitter draughts of defeat in the first year of the war and the sour dregs of stalemate in the second carriage of the calendar came the sweet, exhilarating taste of hope for a victory-starved North in 1863. Heralded by Rosecrans' painstaking recovery of Middle Tennessee south of Nashville following the battle of Stones River, the third year of war brought a series of exciting turnabouts for the Federal army: Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge-Lookout Mountain, the Knoxville campaign, and the virtual recovery of Johnson's beloved East Tennessee. Now that Kentucky and Tennessee were all but secured, the embattled Lincoln administration could turn its attention to the nettlesome problem of abolition without fearing a devastating domino effect on the other border states. Having shaky but visible if not viable military governments in Tennessee, North Carolina, Louisiana, and Arkansas, Lincoln could appease the radicals and others by dealing with what had become the prime issue of the war, the future of the African slave. With Tennessee now clear of a standing Confederate army, the president could freely induce the military governor to come to terms with the larger question animating Lincoln's own constituency. Ironically, the war had lost its savor to many northerners with draft riots in New York, desertion and

bounty jumping all too common, and corruption and profiteering mounting on a grand scale. The longer that the war lasted, the weaker grew the sentiment for keeping it a white man's fight.[77]

Although enlistments of black troops had been made possible by the Emancipation Proclamation, Johnson had withstood Lincoln's earlier entreaties to permit the employment of contraband soldiers, being convinced, as has been noted previously, that the black and the military life were mutually incompatible. Aside from unauthorized and unofficial efforts during the rebel assaults on Nashville and Fort Donelson in late 1862 and early 1863, respectively, the contrabands had been relegated to menial and service roles until the summer of 1863. Under pressure from Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas (who had been given the job of promoting the use of black troops), Rosecrans reluctantly began actively recruiting contrabands in July, 1863.[78] Thus Johnson had been bypassed in his efforts to hold on to the old order. Not only had the army played a major role in destroying slavery in Tennessee by harboring runaways, enticing the willing and seizing even reluctant servants, and impressing the slaves of loyal and rebel alike to build forts, bridges, railroads, and perform other duties, but the Federal command decided to employ the contrabands to fill the maw of war.

Although the military governor decided to support the Lincoln policy of emancipation and even outdistanced the president by

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[77]David Donald, Liberty and Union (Lexington, Mass., 1978), 141-48.

[78]Cimprich, Slavery Amidst Civil War, 184-86.

declaring for immediate emancipation while the White House was still promoting gradual, compensatory schemes, he was initially reluctant to cooperate with the war department's plans to recruit black troops.[79] Jealous of his prerogatives and suspicious of those "persons running in from other states who are anxious to raise negro Regiments for the simple purpose of holding the offices without regard to the Condition of the negro or the suppression of the Rebellion," Johnson decided that if black soldiers could help win the war then he and his fellow Tennesseans would do a better job than meddlesome strangers. Knowing that the very question of arming former slaves would unleash a controversy of great proportions, he warned Stanton that the wrong approach could do great injury to the Union cause. When a notorious radical, Major George L. Stearns, was sent by the adjutant general's office to raise black troops in the Department of the Cumberland, the Tennessee chief executive complained that such action would interrupt more valuable labor on works and projects necessary to support the Federal army. "Major Stearns proposes to organize and place them in Camp where they in fact remain idle," he insisted, believing that "the negroes will quit work when they Can go into Camp and do nothing."[80]

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[79] Johnson to Lincoln, September 17, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[80] Johnson to Stanton, September 17, 1863, Johnson Papers. Stearns, a violent abolitionist, had helped finance John Brown's abortive raid on Harper's Ferry. Allan Nevins, The Emergence of Lincoln (2 vols., New York, 1950), II, 20, 23, 73, 94, 127.

Lincoln, however, urged Johnson to cooperate with the military authorities and to adopt the use of black troops "to guard roads, bridges, and trains, allowing all the better trained soldiers to go forward to Rosecrans."[81] At the same time Stanton placated the Tennessee Unionist, explaining that Stearns served at the pleasure of the military governor and "may be relieved by you whenever his actions is [sic] deemed by you prejudicial." He further assured Johnson that no officers would be appointed to command the black troops without the governor's approval.[82] Thus mollified, the Tennessean acquiesced, permitting the famous abolitionist to establish a number of recruiting stations in Middle Tennessee and even succeeded in getting the war department to promise to compensate Union slaveholders $300 for each slave freed to enter the army. Hence, one factor in Johnson's decision to accept the end of slavery was the pressure from Washington. Coupled with that pressure was the assurance that his stewardship would remain undiminished. The Lincoln administration was so anxious to have his cooperation in the matter of black troops that it was willing to extend his authority over the officers charged with the responsibility of recruiting the black soldiers. Moreover, the war department promised to reimburse loyalists who manumitted their slaves for military purposes.[83]

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[81] Lincoln to Johnson, September 18, 1863, OR, Ser. 3, III, 823.

[82] Stanton to Johnson, September 18, 1863, Johnson Papers.

[83] Cimprich, Slavery Amidst Civil War, 185-86. In a few months, however, Stearns alienated the secretary of war and was replaced.

No doubt convinced that the war had forever destroyed slavery, an eventuality that he had predicted, the Tennessee Unionist sought to make the best of a highly charged situation. Since slavery was breathing its last breath, he resolved to seize the moment and use it to destroy the rebellion.

It is also important to note that Johnson really did not have a clearly defined path to follow after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. The Union camp was split asunder by the spring of 1863, with one group rallying to the Lincoln colors, and the other faction, crying betrayal and false promises, still licking its wounds and plotting bold intrigues and reprisals. Sensitive to the political muscle of the radicals and fearful of the powerful northern Copperheads, the Tennessee governor saw his last options evaporate in the spring and summer of 1863. Since Don Carlos Buell had been virtually cashiered almost certainly due to suspicions about his true sympathies and George B. McClellan was soon to end his career with similar doubts expressed about his conduct, few officers would be openly interested in protecting southern slavery. Consequently, the military represented a powerful pressure group, antagonistic to slavery. The governor could see slavery dying every time the press gang raided a Negro church or the blue coats visited a plantation.

He told Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana in early September, 1863, that slavery was already destroyed, awaiting only legal abolition. Johnson was "thoroughly in favor of immediate emancipation," Dana recalled, "both as a matter of moral right and as the indispensable condition of that large immigration of

industrious freedmen which he thought necessary to repeople and regenerate the State."[84] Furthermore, the plebeian may have genuinely felt the class antagonism that he often expressed (although we have seen that his strident calls for rigorous punishment were often tempered by a more accommodating manner). He surely resented the political and social power of the planter aristocracy, having urged the people "to cast off the slavish fear which had hitherto sealed their lips on this question." In his public valedictory on slavery delivered on August 29, 1863, the former tailor proclaimed a new era to the non-slaveholders of his state, urging them to speak and act henceforth as free men should. "The slave aristocracy had long held its foot upon their necks, and exacted heavy tribute from them, even to robbing them of free speech," he declared, pronouncing the obituary of the old regime.[85]

Always a Jacksonian and an advocate of the common man and the working class, Johnson seemed genuinely disposed to "an aristocracy of labor." Convinced that the resources of Tennessee, her timber, minerals, soil, and climate, would attract the sturdy yeomanry and mechanics from other sections to mine her treasures, he believed that

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[84] Dana, Recollections, 106; Dana to Stanton, September 8, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XXX, pt. 1, pp. 182-83. One "real, simon-pure Yankee, born in the very heart of New England," but a long-time Tennessee resident, echoed the governor. He urged that all lands in excess of a forty-acre homestead (which might be retained by the wives and children of former slaveholders) be given to Federal soldiers, immigrants, and the emancipated bondsmen. Cincinnati Gazette, November 2, 1863.

[85] Speech in Nashville, August 29, 1863, Nashville Union, September 1, 1863.

the Negro question would resolve itself. "The train must move on, and Slavery must get out of the way," he asserted.

> It is only necessary to cut up Alabama and Mississippi into moderate sized farms, for industrious men to cultivate with their own hands, and there would not only be an increase of the cotton crop, but the production also of all the bread and meat necessary for those States.[86]

Here one might presume that the governor intended to support a program of land seizure, distribution, and social leveling. However, the Tennessee politician was only signaling that slavery was not necessary for the economic well-being of the South. Rather than seriously prescribing the radical pharmacopoeia of "forty acres and a mule," Johnson was merely resorting to hyperbole and a little stump demagoguery. Although he might truly carry the psychic scars of his own poverty, there is no credible evidence that he ever seriously entertained a program of confiscation and redistribution. He likely had too much faith in the primacy of the work ethic to embrace a concept of a genuine social revolution. Although the Tennessean might often resort to the rhetoric of the radical, he was certainly no Jacobin.

A final reason that he eventually accepted emancipation might reside in the weight of the attitudes of those with whom he worked,

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[86] Speech at the Capitol, October 17, 1863, Cincinnati Gazette, October 21, 1863. Johnson's remarks, delivered to a gathering at the state capitol, celebrating a Republican electoral victory over Vallandigham and his fellow Copperheads in Ohio, occasioned a hostile journalist to ridicule the "love feast" of radicals and sympathizers. The audience was composed of military men, cotton speculators, beef contractors, and other loyalists "of that stripe," the correspondent observed, "including a sprinkling of our African brethren." Chicago Times, October 23, 1863.

including men like Edward East, Joseph Fowler, Sam Milligan, and Parson Brownlow, who also endorsed abolition. Most would play major roles in the reconstruction government that would replace the Johnson regime.[87] Although Johnson's past records show that he was more a maverick than an ingredient in the group mentality, he surely could not but be influenced to some extent by the views and biases of his own governing officials and Union allies.

Whatever the reasons, Johnson's willingness to cleave to the party line on abolition removed an important obstacle remaining between him and the Republican president. Coupled with Federal successes in the military arena, the governor's conversion to emancipation was of great moment. He still was a national figure. A Washington observer explained that Tennessee events were carefully scrutinized in the nation's capital, especially by "the friends of Governor Johnson in this city, who manifest a no[t] inconsiderable solicitude on his behalf." The commentator pointed out that sometimes, while "it may appear to some that the authorities here are quiet as regards events in Tennessee, the contrary is the case, and the names of Andrew Johnson and the lesser luminaries in your midst are at all times texts of interesting discourses and

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[87] See, for example, unpublished memorial, Sam Milligan Papers; various undated newspaper clippings, Joseph S. Fowler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. By the time of his public acceptance of emancipation, Johnson apparently believed that most Tennesseans would tolerate the abolition of slavery, "their only doubt being about the subsequent status of the negro," or so he told a northern visitor. Charles A. Dana to Stanton, September 8, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XXX, pt. 1, pp. 182-83.

dialogues."[88] Indeed Tennessee was already attracting its share of northern visitors, individuals anxious to see the war firsthand and speculate on the opportunities provided by the abandoned and surplus lands of the South.

Although the Confederacy would make one last bloody but heroic attempt to wrest the state from the Federal grasp, Tennessee was unencumbered by the main rebel armies until John Bell Hood's ill-fated assault on Nashville in December, 1864.[89] By the terms of Lincoln's proclamation of amnesty and reconstruction, pardons could be secured by all Confederates taking the oath of allegiance to the United States. In addition, whenever one-tenth of the voting population of 1860 took the oath, state governments could be organized and recognized by the Lincoln administration. Thus, aside from Hood's unsuccessful attack on Nashville, political events began to overshadow military developments in Tennessee as the focus of the war tended to shift eastward in 1864.

In the political arena, not only had emancipation split the Union ranks, but it also posed a considerable technical problem for the military governor. How could the abolition of slavery be

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[88] Nashville Press, September 1, 1863.

[89] It should be remembered that stragglers, irregulars, and partisan bands continued to harass the Federal military detachments and to render the roads, bridges, and byways unsafe in certain areas. Indeed one of the minor successes of the war occurred in Johnson's own Greeneville on September 4, 1864, when the First Tennessee Cavalry, commanded by his friend Alvan C. Gillem, surprised John Hunt Morgan's raiders and killed the celebrated cavalry commander. Boatner, Civil War Dictionary, 566.

legally achieved? The Tennessee constitution expressly forbade emancipation of slaves without the consent of owners and further prohibited the seizure of property without appropriate legislative action or compensation. Moreover, amendments to the constitution required the approval of two consecutive general assemblies and ratification by the people.[90] Obviously, the distracted condition of the state, the vacancies in most of the state offices, and the dubious legality and extraordinary character of the military government militated against a normal solution of the problem even had there been no civil war in progress and the mass of the Tennesseans fiercely in favor of abolition. Under these circumstances a legal precedent did not exist. However, Andrew Johnson proved to be both resourceful and pragmatic.

In remarks delivered in Nashville on January 8, 1864, he chose to press for both the emancipation of slavery and to reaffirm his views on the nature of the Union. Conceding that "the ordinary civil functions of the State have been for a time necessarily suspended," he argued that the government was indestructible, perpetual, and comprehensive:

> Away with the idea of State suicide! Away with the doctrine of secession, its twin brother! We are part of a great whole, working at present somewhat inharmoniously, but as soon as the Government puts down the rebellion, and the machinery be again put in running order, leaving out whatever may have before prevented its running smoothly, the State will stand firm. Some of her institutions may be rubbed out, but the State stands. . . . I admit no such thing as

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[90]Miller, Official Manual, 87, 82, 93-94.

> reconstruction; the idea is as bad as secession. Your legislature ran away; does that destroy the State? The Governor ran away; does that destroy the State? They took with them the bank funds and the school fund; but the State is here yet. . . . When you destroy a State you destroy the union of the States.[91]

Johnson claimed that slavery represented a disruptive and divisive element, arguing a favorite theme that no institution should be allowed pre-eminence above the government. Consequently slavery should be abolished. "Destroy the rebellion," he counseled, "and let slavery go with it." Such powers lay with the president's prerogative. He could appoint officers to administer the laws and to secure a representative form of government. "The rebellion being put down, the Legislature might be convened to-morrow."[92]

But, alas, the general assembly was a casualty of the war, its errant members scattered and long absent, its functions unfulfilled, and its deliberations now silenced. Although Johnson evinced a near mystical reverence for the Constitution and associated legal forms, he could not achieve the abolition of slavery without a constitutional amendment. Without a general assembly could he secure the amendment? Without emancipation would not be divisions remain and the sacrifice of blood and treasure continue? Having confronted these dilemmas he resolved to find a way to secure emancipation. Acutely conscious of the need to end the abolition debate, he decided on an extralegal solution to his problem. "I am Satisfied that a

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[91] Speech on Slavery, Secession, and State Suicide, January 8, 1864, Nashville Union, January 12, 1864.

[92] Ibid.

convention Should be Called," the Tennessee plebeian confided to Horace Maynard, "which will put the state at once upon its legs, and forever Settle the Slavery question." Perhaps two senators could also then be appointed "who are Sound as regards the Slavery question and the Union."[93] Such an approach would clearly violate the established procedures for constitutional amendments and the selection of United States senators. However, the governor was surely now more concerned about the ends than the means for achieving his objectives.

Johnson's organ reminded its readers that the times required extraordinary actions, declaring that "nothing is clearer than that the present state of affairs is an anomaly never dreamed of by those who aided in the erection of Tennessee into a State." The editor also pointed out the hallowed heroes of the constitutional convention of 1787 had assumed undelegated powers, disregarded previous forms, framed the Constitution, and appealed directly to the people.[94] In an effort to find a way to emancipate the slaves and begin the work of restoration, Johnson, Manson M. Brien, Joseph Fowler, and others of similar views participated in a public meeting which drew perhaps 2,000 persons to the capitol on the evening of January 21, and thereby secured an endorsement for the governor's subsequent actions. A suitable preamble and four resolutions were adopted, including statements calling for a constitutional convention composed of

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[93]Johnson to Maynard, January 14, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[94]Nashville Union, January 14, 1864.

delegates favoring "immediate and universal emancipation, now and for ever." Having "implicit confidence in the integrity of Hon. Andrew Johnson, Military Governor of the State," those in attendance resolved to leave the assembling of such a convention to a time when the provisional governor might determine that delegates from all parts of the state could be in attendance.[95]

Johnson spoke to this gathering of his supporters, restating his belief in the inevitability of emancipation, the folly of continued rebel resistance, the benefits of free labor, and the future of the former slave. Still unwilling to concede equality between the black and white races, he, nevertheless, refused to accept the perpetuation of the peculiar institution, asking rhetorically whether "every inferior man [should] be assigned to slavery." Confident that freedom would make the former slave more productive, he hoped that "the negro will go in Mexico, where there is not the difference in class or distinction, in reference to blood." On the matter of a convention he proclaimed his support of the idea, provided some way could be found to exclude disloyal men. "As I remarked before, sometimes we may do irregular things for the sake of getting back law and order."[96]

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[95]Chicago Times, January 23, 1864; Nashville Dispatch, January 22, 1864; Nashville Press, January 22, 1864. Perhaps a harbinger of events to come appeared when a motion endorsing the president's amnesty proclamation failed for want of a second.

[96]Speech on Restoration of the State Government, January 21, 1864, Nashville Dispatch, January 24, 1864.

A fellow Unionist, Allen A. Hall, then minister to Bolivia, however, cautioned the governor against moving too rapidly to restore the state government. Hall, a former Whig party functionary and Nashville editor (who had killed a rival journalist in 1859 for calling him a Black Republican) felt that the revolutionary conditions in Tennessee militated against hastily turning to the ballot box and to the vox populi:

> Elections! What people! Governor! in your situation, I can well understand the repugnance you would naturally feel to being thought opposed to the holding of elections for all manner of State officers--members of Congress, Governor, and members of the Legislature, who would elect Senators to Congress, &c. But the public good, the public safety, peremptorily demand of you, that from no "squeamishness," you should fail to put your face upon a course of policy, which you know as well as I do is fraught with great mischief. . . . And you will incur the heaviest responsibility of your public life if you . . . permit a rickety State organization, such only as could be effected now, to take the control of affairs.[97]

Hall's remarks were indicative of Johnson's dilemma. On the one hand, he had to restore and reorganize a state government, and on the other, he surely had to prevent the apparatus thus reconstructed from falling into the hands of its enemies. The governor obviously chafed at the lack of legitimacy in his position and certainly resented his inability to restore quickly the reins of power to the proper hands. Yet every move he made to begin the work of reorganization was fecund with danger. Even after he had boldly laid hands on the

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[97]Allen A. Hall to Johnson, January 19, 1864, Johnson Papers; John Lellyett to Johnson, April 4, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, IV, 461n.

poisonous barb of slavery, many thorny questions remained to pain the recovery of legitimate rule in Tennessee

A Loudon Unionist perceived the difficulties facing the governor and others who now wished to rid the state of the peculiar institution. "Shall we ban it simply & only by the force & authority of the President's proclamation?" he wondered.[98] And another expressed impatience over the confusion in White House policy. "If President Lincoln's amnesty plan is to be carried out, how and when are we to commence?"[99] Procedural problems were replacing the vexations of the Confederate armies as the provisional government moved into its third year. Echoing the Tennessee executive's own thought, John A. Campbell, an East Tennessean lately removed to Indiana, worried about the technicalities of emancipating the slaves when a constitutional amendment was required and that meant a convention. But even this path crossed dangerous ground. "Is there not danger of a pro-slavery power & influence getting into the Convention, which would distract its councils and seek to pervert its object,--seek to get up a political howl in the state--to divide the Union party into hostile factisons [sic]."[100]

Realizing that such an eventuality was possible, Johnson delayed calling a convention. Instead he turned his attention to

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[98]John A. Campbell to Johnson, January 18, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[99]James B. Bingham to Johnson, January 22, [1864], Memphis Bulletin, January 30, 1864.

[100]Campbell to Johnson, January 18, 1864, Johnson Papers.

reorganizing the government at the local level, ordering elections to be held on March 5 for the various justices of the peace, sheriffs, constables, trustees, circuit and county clerks, registers, and tax collectors. However, "it is not expected that the enemies of the United States will propose to vote," he declared, "nor is it intended that they be permitted to vote, or hold office." Although the president extended him the authority to administer the amnesty oath contained in the proclamation of December 8, 1863, the military governor decided to exclude the former enemies of the state by a more rigorous requirement. If a citizen proposed to vote or run for office in the March elections, he then had to take a new oath, not only promising to defend the U. S. Constitution, but clearly renouncing all previous hostile views. "I ardently desire the suppression of the present insurrection and rebellion against the Government of the United States, the success of its armies and the defeat of all those who oppose them," one had to swear, "and further, that I will hereafter heartily aid and assist all loyal people in the accomplishment of these results."[101] This meant that all persons desiring to vote whether loyal or not, had to take this more stringent, iron-clad oath.

Early in his tenure, Johnson had allowed a local election for judge to take place in Nashville, only to see a known rebel sympathizer, Turner S. Foster, triumph over Manson M. Brien, the Unionist candidate.

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[101] Lincoln and Horace Maynard to Johnson, January 25, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 149-50; Proclamation Ordering Elections, January 26, 1864, Nashville Union, January 27, 1864; Nashville Press, February 2, 1864.

The governor resolved that no such embarrassment would take place again. The growing strength of radicals in the provisional government meant that prospective voters would have to swear not only loyalty to the Federal government but to endorse its every measure, including emancipation. The president gave his blessing. "Loyal as well as disloyal should take the oath, because it does not hurt them, clears all questions as to their right to vote, and swells the aggregate number who take it, which is an important object," he advised.[102] With the president desperately hoping to restore a semblance of loyalty to Federally occupied areas and the governor anxiously trying to prevent a resurgency of proslavery political power, the oath seemed the only solution.

Various individuals, however, complained that there were inherent contradictions in the presidential amnesty oath and Johnson's more rigorous version. Edwin H. Ewing, a proslavery Whig, derided the Tennessee governor's approach, observing that according to the president's proclamation those former rebels taking the amnesty oath were "to be restored to all of their civil personal rights." How then "will it be necessary also, before a person is allowed to vote," Ewing asked, "that he should take the oath prescribed by you."[103]

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[102] Lincoln and Maynard to Johnson, January 25, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 149-50.

[103] Edwin H. Ewing to Johnson, February ?, 1864, Nashville Press, February 2, 1864. Ewing, along with his brother Andrew and others, had decamped Nashville with such comic celerity when the

An old Douglas Democrat and conservative Unionist, Joseph Ramsay of Bedford County, agreed with Ewing. He asserted that the Tennessee executive's action was unnecessary and redundant. For "if the people could have an opportunity to take the oath prescribed by the President, it was all that was necessary to qualify persons to vote either in municipal or State elections." Nevertheless, Ramsay professed cheerful willingness to take the oath and urged others to do so, declaring that failure to hold elections at the appointed time would delay legal restoration of the government another two years. However, others were less charitable. Now openly hostile, anti-administration conservatives used the Nashville Press as a vehicle to launch a severe counterattack on the provisional governor, charging the "public functionary" with tyranny, disfranchisement, thwarting the milder policy of Lincoln with his election oath, and even drawing the salaries of senator, brigadier-general, and military governor simultaneously.[104]

In one sense, the objections to Johnson's oath are specious and may be properly viewed as politically rather than legally or logically motivated. The governor's "iron-clad" oath required that

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Federals approached in 1862 that those enraged rebel soldiers left behind had plundered the Ewings' palatial estate. However, by early 1864, he was counseling his fellow Tennesseans to accept Lincoln's amnestry through a pamphlet, selling for five cents a copy and published by the anti-Johnson Nashville Press. Rees W. Porter to Johnson, March 1, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 168-69; Nashville Press, January 28, 1864.

[104]Joseph Ramsay to Horace Maynard, February 12, 1864, Lincoln Papers; Joseph Ramsay to Johnson April 12, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 299-300; Nashville Press, January 29, February 1, 4, 1864; Nashville Times and True Union, February 20, 1864.

a person must swear that "I ardently desire the suppression of the present insurrection and rebellion against the government of the United States, the success of its armies, and the defeat of all those who oppose them." What real legal difference would there be between this requirement and a person taking Lincoln's amnesty oath, proclaiming that "I will henceforth faithfully support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the union of the states thereunder?" Surely the Civil War was a conflict between those who sought to defend the government, the Constitution, and the Union, and those who ardently desired the Confederacy and the rebellion. Johnson's oath merely explicitly stated what was implicit in the president's amnesty proclamation, namely that a person receiving a pardon must renounce the rebellion and promise to defend the Constitution against all enemies. Moreover, those taking Lincoln's oath agreed to "faithfully support" all acts of Congress and presidential proclamations, which required swallowing without hesitation the various confiscation acts, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Negro enlistment act, all sweeping away the bonds of servitude and uprooting the social system of the South. Samuel C. Mercer, the governor's original editorial mouthpiece, observed cogently that a person taking the amnesty oath "has steeped himself to the lips in the intensest radicalism, and if he does not perjure himself is an excellent practical abolitionist."[105] Thus the real reason behind the opposition to Johnson's election oath could have hardly been a

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[105] Ibid., February 22, 1864.

desire to secure less stringent terms under Lincoln's amnesty proclamation. Indeed, those who argued that the governor's oath was superfluous were correct. However, a person could hardly defend the Union without desiring the suppression of its enemies. Consequently, the real impact of Johnson's addendum to the amnesty proclamation was to provide a false issue around which his opponents could rally. The Nashville Press chose to ignore the antislavery character of the amnesty proclamation. The editor claimed that "President Lincoln has pronounced that a sound Union man may be proslavery" and a correspondent went even further. "If you do not want to free the negroes among us, and educate them, as the President desires, you will not be bound to do it," he insisted, "but can vote to maintain our State Constitution and laws just as they were before the war, and the negroes will be in their former conditions."[106]

With certain conservatives seemingly interpreting the president's amnesty oath as a means of retaining the old order, Johnson went to Washington to clarify the situation and to seek Lincoln's support. A loyal Tennessean, Warren Jordan, newly appointed as a Cheatham County election official, also sought guidance from Washington on whether to use the new test oath or the amnesty proclamation. Having discussed such matters with Johnson, the president responded immediately, perfectly willing to permit his own proscription to be superceded. Lincoln advised Jordan that "you had better stand by Governor Johnson's plan, otherwise you will have conflict and

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[106]Nashville Press, January 30, 1864.

confusion."[107] Thus the stage was set for an election that served only to underline the continuous animosity between the various factions in Tennessee. The proslavery groups boycotted the local elections, guaranteeing sparse returns and the selection of administration supporters.[108] Tragically, the Union coalition was now totally destroyed by the slavery issue, which had been resurrected as a divisive force by the Emancipation Proclamation and subsequent events. Momentarily, the common task of preserving the Union had obscured the great political, social, and economic differences within the loyal vanguard. Now these old animosities appeared again, like Macbeth's spectral banquet guest, to haunt the military governor's final months in Tennessee. But Andrew Johnson had long reached the point of no return.

Upon his arrival in Tennessee after his consultation with the president, the provisional governor immediately began holding meetings in various localities, trying to stir up enthusiasm for a constitutional convention. Seemingly emboldened by his discussions in Washington and the response of loyal groups in Middle Tennessee to his personal appeal, he glossed over the immense obstacles that he faced when he reported on his activities to the president. "Indications on the part of the people were much better than I anticipated

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[107] Nashville Union, February 9, 1864; Warren Jordon to William H. Seward, February 20, 1864; Lincoln to Jordan, February 20, 1864, Nashville Times and True Union, March 1, 1864; Nashville Press, March 5, 1864; Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 196.

[108] Nashville Union, March 8, 1864; Nashville Times and True Union, March 7, 1864; Nashville Press, March 25, 1864; Hall, Military Governor, 122-23.

in regard to the emancipation of Slavery," he observed, following a rally at Shelbyville. "As soon as practicable there must be a Convention, which I believe will settle the slavery question definitely and finely [sic]." Indeed he urged an abolition amendment to the U. S. Constitution, "the sooner it is done, the better--."[109]

In an effort to rally support to his cause, Johnson turned his attention to East Tennessee, devastated by the war, foraged to the point of starvation in certain areas, and bleeding from three years of internecine conflict. Union soldiers, Confederate stragglers, and guerrilla bands roamed the backwoods and byways, engaging in an orgy of wanton retribution.[110] The vindictive Parson Brownlow, having drunk deeply from the bitter cup of hatred, reestablished his famous newspaper under the title Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator. That spring he promoted the idea that "it is proper and right for Union men to shoot down, upon sight" those rebels and Confederate officials who had persecuted the loyalists.[111] While Brownlow and his fellow radicals spat out the dregs of vengeance, other Unionists, doomed by the accident of residence and moved by an affection for the old order, watched for a chance to avoid the certain social upheaval of emancipation.

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[109]Johnson to Lincoln, April 5, 1864, Lincoln Papers; Nashville Union, April 5, 1864.

[110]Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 63-74.

[111]Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator, April 9, 1864.

Former Congressman Thomas A. R. Nelson, arrested by Virginia home guards in 1861, and subsequently paroled by President Davis upon his sworn promise not to oppose the Confederate government, denounced Lincoln's proposal to free the slaves in 1862. In a broadside widely reprinted in southern newspapers, the East Tennessee Unionist advocated resistance to the Republican war measure. "If you would save yourselves from a species of carnage unexampled in the history of North America, but unequivocally invited in Mr. Lincoln's proclamation," he warned, "let every man who is able to fight buckle on his armor, and without awaiting the slow and tedious process of conscription, at once volunteer to aid in the struggle against him."[112] Nelson and other prominent East Tennesseans, including Hawkins County lawyer John Netherland; the distinguished Knoxville attorney John Baxter; former minister and Carter County farmer William B. Carter (who schemed to burn the railroad bridges in East Tennessee in 1861); and General James G. Spears, who commanded a volunteer brigade at Cumberland Gap, all originally opposed secession. Spears, the only Democrat in this particular group, had recently been dismissed from the army due to his opposition to emancipation.[113]

Convinced that a new administration should replace the Lincoln government, Nelson, the original president of the celebrated

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[112]Address of Hon. T. A. R. Nelson to the People of East Tennessee, October 3, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, pp. 909-11; Knoxville Register, October 5, 1862.

[113]Verton M. Queener, "The Origin of the Republican Party in East Tennessee," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 13 (1941), 77-78.

Greeneville-Knoxville convention of 1861, sent out a call to reconvene the convention on April 12, 1864. This third version of the East Tennessee convention would meet in Knoxville amidst great tension and political discord. Although Nelson and his fellow travelers, Carter, Spears, Baxter, and others, sought to turn the convention into a referendum on the policy of Andrew Johnson as military governor, they found themselves opposed by "a new set of men who to a large extent belonged to the army, and who had imbibed by suffering and persecution, feelings quite unlike those of the men who had neither suffered nor entered the army."[114] Aware that the convention spelled trouble, the governor traveled to Knoxville, reportedly growing more radical in his utterances and even speaking to "a vast concourse on the street" while his detractors and defenders debated his merits in the Knox County court house.[115]

With rebel pickets just sixty miles away in Johnson's beloved Greeneville, some observers hearkened back to the original East Tennessee convention which memorialized the legislature in 1861 to permit the eastern section to separate from the rest of the state. Many persons apparently were considering the question of reviving this possibility. Reportedly Unionists like James Hood of the newly founded Chattanooga Gazette and even the venerable Parson Brownlow betrayed a great anxiety about the wisdom of their home section's continued association with the traitorous middle and western portions

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[114]Temple, Notable Men, 407.

[115]Nashville Times and True Union, April 13, 1864.

of the state. The Gazette revealed that "there is a deep seated determination on the part of the loyal people of East Tennessee to sever the political ties which have long bound them to 'rebellious' Middle and West Tennessee."[116] Concerned that Brownlow and other loyalists held similar views, Johnson and Maynard counseled against separation, apparently winning over the editors of the Knoxville Whig and the Chattanooga Gazette. The leaders of the separation movement allegedly abandoned their efforts, provided that the people could meet in a convention in the very near future to reorganize the state.[117]

Having seemingly prevented a separatist movement from diverting the East Tennessee convention, the military governor and his supporters were equally successful in keeping the conservatives from getting the upper hand in the proceedings. Four rancorous days of debate, speeches, and efforts to pass resolutions supporting or criticizing the Federal government and the Johnson regime ended in stalemate. Much of the business centered around the efforts of Nelson, Carter, and other conservatives to embarrass the governor. When Johnson finally received an opportunity to address the convention "he did so in a very bitter spirit," one participant recalled, "indulging in a personal quarrel with Mr. Carter."[118] Nevertheless, the governor emerged from the encounter stronger than ever, having

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[116] Chattanooga Gazette, March 13, 1864, quoted by New York Times, March 21, 1864.

[117] Ibid., March 21, April 21, May 8, 1864.

[118] Temple, Notable Men, 407.

dominated the headlines and clearly demonstrated his skill at obstructing a hostile body, wherein his friends were outnumbered.

When the convention could not agree on the majority report written by his enemies or the minority report promoted by his friends, the governor's old crony, Sam Milligan, called for adjournment and the proceedings were ended sine die.[119] Immediately, the administration's supporters held a mass meeting, adopted a series of resolutions complimentary of Johnson's stewardship (which he had written, himself), and gave him a forum for a further speech, wherein he pronounced the obituary of slavery and the need for a convention so to amend the state's constitution. "The first gun fired upon Fort Sumter," he proclaimed, "emancipated the last slaves in this country." With slavery already a casualty of the war there could be only one last legal response. "You haven't to abolish Slavery; it is already effectually done," he said, "and it only remains for you to legalize freedom."[120]

With the governor's words echoing in their ears, the Tennessee Unionists returned to their homes, farms, offices, businesses, and, for some, their military responsibilities. The schism was now complete. The Union movement was thus irrevocably divided into two hostile camps, one rallying to Lincoln, Johnson, and abolition, and the other pursuing the nostalgic vision of Campbell, Lellyett,

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[119] New York Times, May 8, 1864; New York Tribune, April 30, 1864; Temple, Notable Men, 407.

[120] Speech at Knoxville, April 16, 1864, New York Tribune, April 30, 1864.

Etheridge, and Nelson, who, while opposing secession, did not wish to turn their backs resolutely on the world shattered by the war's first salvo. Still determined to unite the "men of fixed and settled convictions, who stand unmoved by the ultra elements of either section," the conservatives began plans to oppose the Republican administration by fielding a national presidential candidate to be chosen later in the summer at Chicago.[121]

Unable or unwilling to convene a constitutional convention in an atmosphere so poisoned with discord, the governor bided his time. Most surely he recognized that the Tennessee rebels were still bold and defiant. Given the division within the Union ranks in Tennessee and the emergence of a bona fide national conservative movement (which soon would coalesce behind George B. McClellan, the once proud general of the Army of the Potomac), he could have hardly been sanguine about an early re-establishment of civil government. Certainly, any attempt to restore fully the machinery of civil functions would result in embarrassment.[122] He was so advised. One correspondent warned that any election would be farcical and subject to fraud.

> I am opposed to any more elections, State or Municipal, until we have one for the election of members of a State Convention, and I am in favor of putting that off for several months--at least until we can get some Federal

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[121]See William R. Hurley to Editor, May 10, 1864, Nashville Press, May 16, 1864.

[122]See, for example, Nashville Times and True Union, March 7, 9, 1864.

> Commanders here who will not show rebels more favors than they do Unconditional Union men.[123]

Already, however, forces beyond the state were bearing upon the destiny of Tennessee and its military governor. Even before he left Nashville to checkmate the conservatives at the East Tennessee convention, Johnson had a grander vision which would occupy his efforts in the coming months.[124] Insiders in his own circle and in the camp of his political opposition correctly predicted that the Tennessee tailor would become the Republican presidential running-mate in the fall election.[125] Although the East Tennessee convention revealed the deep divisions within the Union element in Tennessee, nationally Andrew Johnson was being promoted as a hero and the ideal vice presidential candidate.[126] Despite the presence already of a sitting vice president, Hannibal Hamlin of Maine (whose background as a defrocked New England Democrat would have normally seemed to provide the proper balance for an Illinois Republican president), by mid-March the "Nashville friends of Gov. Johnson here confidently expect his nomination by the Republican Convention as Vice President on the

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[123]James B. Bingham to Johnson, April 23, 1860, Johnson Papers.

[124]An opposition sheet observed that the Tennessean had thought of little else except the presidency. "Visions of White Houses, Cabinets, Inaugural Addresses, and Annual Messages, have floated continually before his eyes, shutting out all the rest of earth and the whole of heaven from his view." Louisville Journal, June 11, 1864.

[125]Chicago Tribune, March 23, 1864; A. Banning Norton to Campbell, March 7, 1864, Campbell Papers.

[126]See Nashville Union, January 20, 1864; New York Commercial, quoted in Chattanooga Gazette, March 5, 1864.

ticket with Lincoln."[127] Although the optimism of the governor's supporters could well have been based on wishful thinking, there seems to be solid evidence that he had strong support beyond his own state. That Johnson would be Lincoln's running-mate was deemed so great a certainty in certain quarters that William B. Campbell was promised the same spot on a conservative ticket by a group of Democrats and anti-administration operatives planning to support McClellan. They hoped to put forward Campbell as their southern Unionist on an anti-Lincoln, pro-armistice ticket to counter the president's anticipated "southern strategy." Known as the Conservative Union National Committee, the organizers sought to realign the Democratic party by promoting compromise and attracting southern Unionists opposed to the radical measures of the Republican party. Indeed, a Philadelphia convention meeting in Independence Hall had already nominated McClellan and Campbell on December 23, 1863. Certain that Johnson would be nominated by the pro-Lincoln forces if the president were renominated, the conservatives began to plan accordingly.[128]

Unable to gain enough momentum to act independently, the Conservative Union National Committee, having offered its standard-bearers, McClellan and Campbell to the party, was swallowed up by the

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[127]Chicago Tribune, March 23, 1864.

[128]See Max Langenschwartz to Campbell, January 12, 1864; Conservative Union National Committee broadsheet, December 24, 1864; A. Banning Norton to Campbell, March 7, 1864, Campbell Papers.

superior Democratic organization. Derided by a contemporary critic as a collection of "pre-Adamite fossils," the conservatives would see their presidential nominee and essential principles of compromise and conciliation adopted by the Democrats; but Campbell would be shunted aside in favor of George B. Pendleton, an Ohio politico whose reputed Copperhead notions did little to improve the Democrats' credibility. Ironically, suspicions about Campbell's own true loyalties may also have been his undoing.[129]

Meanwhile, Lincoln had kept his own counsel regarding his preferences for a running-mate. There was plenty of pressure to select Andrew Johnson. From Indiana, the Evansville Journal bannered a Lincoln-Johnson ticket early in January.[130] That same month the Kansas general assembly passed a resolution urging that the two men be declared candidates "by acclamation, without the formality of

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[129]Having denounced the Lincoln-Johnson reconstruction efforts in Tennessee wherein his own house was guarded by "niggers with arms in their hands," while white men were disarmed and female virtue at the mercy of "lust and opportunity," the ex-governor was apparently victimized by two of his own allies. William B. Carter, the East Tennessean responsible for the ill-fated bridge-burning schemes in 1861, and Emerson Etheridge, lately plotting with Campbell to embarrass Johnson in the abortive gubernatorial election, reportedly helped discredit the vice-presidential aspirant at the Chicago convention. Supposedly believing that the ex-governor once had written a letter "in which you assured your 'Southern friends' that your heart was with them in this struggle," Carter repeated this tidbit to Etheridge, who then apparently leaked the information to others. Although Carter later apologized for "the base use of my name, to your injury, at Chicago," the damage was done. "It at once flashed on me that Mr. E. desired the nomination and wished to use me in order to get you out of the way," the East Tennessean claimed, but he, nevertheless, desired to remain on friendly terms with both Etheridge and Campbell. Chicago Tribune, August 28, 1864; Carter to Campbell, September 6, 1864, Campbell Papers.

[130]Nashville Union, January 20, 1864.

a National Convention." Representing the industrial sector, the tabloid Iron Age promoted a Lincoln-Johnson candidacy, conspicuously portraying the Tennessean as a working-class hero.[131] The Indiana Union convention also endorsed Lincoln and Johnson in February, demonstrating the extent of the Tennessean's appeal in the mid-West. By this time the military governor was in Washington, with the president, discussing the amnesty proclamation, his own test oath, and the prospects for Tennessee's restoration.[132] In this last encounter before the election, Johnson and the rail splitter from Illinois apparently impressed each other favorably.[133] As previously mentioned, the Republican gave his warm support for Johnson's test oath, finding no conflict with his own restoration efforts. "I have seen and examined Governor Johnson's proclamation, and am entirely satisfied with his plan," he noted, having given the Tennessean copies of his replies to those who raised questions.[134]

"Almost daily we have some indications of Presidential aspirations and incipient operations" for the November election, Navy

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[131]Resolutions of the Kansas General Assembly, January 30, 1864; Iron Age Extra, January, 1864, Lincoln Papers.

[132]Nashville Times and True Union, February 26, 1864; Nashville Press, February 12, 1864.

[133]During a visit to "the Presidents House," Johnson talked to a number of people, including ex-New York Senator Preston King, later a Lincoln elector, about his position on the slavery issue and other questions. This conversation helped convince at least one of those present that he was compatible with the president. George B. Lincoln to Johnson, June 11, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[134]Lincoln to Edward H. East, February 27, 1864; Lincoln to Warren Jordan, February 20, 1864; Lincoln to Telegraph Office, February 25, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 209, 196, 205.

Secretary Gideon Welles confided to his diary that same February, observing that the president exhibited an unconcealed interest in the coming contest, although traduced by conspirators and mercenary opponents.[135] Nevertheless, the Illinois naif would prove to be a formidable politician as he studied his options. Confronted with radical Republicans anxious to replace him and an opportunistic, rejuvenated Democracy, capitalizing on war-weariness and the dearth of recent Union victories, the embattled president resolved to cut his losses. He decided that the former Maine Democrat Hannibal Hamlin was expendable. Generally ignored in administration councils, weakened by an ongoing quarrel with Welles over patronage, and saddled with the misfortune of being from a safe Republican state, the vice president had little influence, even in New England. "Why would not Johnson be a good man to nominate?" the president mused aloud to Pennsylvanians Simon Cameron and Thaddeus Stevens at a strategy meeting early in 1864. Realizing that Hamlin's attractiveness to his old party was less than a latter day War Democrat like Andrew Johnson (or even Benjamin F. Butler, whom he also inexplicably considered), Lincoln had concluded by late spring to restyle his ticket with the Tennessee military governor and seek bipartisan support.[136] However, the chief executive was confronted with more immediate problems.

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[135] Beale, Gideon Welles Diary, I, 520-21.

[136] Don C. Sietz, Lincoln the Politician: How the Rail-Splitter and Flat Boatman Played the Great American Game (New York, 1931), 42; H. Draper Hunt, Hannibal Hamlin of Maine: Lincoln's First Vice-President (Syracuse, N.Y., 1969), 178-83.

Johnson's conversations with Lincoln were coincidental with the high tide of Salmon P. Chase's pursuit of the Republican nomination. There was formidable opposition to a second term for Lincoln throughout the Republican party. The Jacobins railed at his preemption of reconstruction while conservatives disapproved of the use of the draft, Negro troops, and other radical policies. Prone to dismiss his treasury secretary's poorly concealed presidential ambitions as a mere annoyance ("a horsefly on the neck of a plow-horse"), the rail splitter was thunderstruck by the so-called "Pomeroy Circular," an anti-Lincoln letter which called for the nomination of Chase. Originally a private communication circulated among friends by Senator Samuel Pomeroy of Kansas, the document was published in the newspapers of February 22 and immediately caused a sensation. Although Secretary Welles accurately predicted that the Pomeroy letter would be more damaging "[in its recoil] than its projectile" by forcing Chase either to resign or disavow any presidential aspiration, the Lincoln supporters were galvanized to action. In state after state, they persuaded Union Leagues and local committees to announce for Lincoln until the Chase boom collapsed from the pressure.[137]

Johnson's visit to Washington was surely propitious. For here was an opportunity for Lincoln to hold a showpiece administration figure in his camp by sustaining the Tennessee governor's policies. Never mind that they seemed to conflict with his own. Although the

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[137]Stephen B. Oates, With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln (New York, 1977), 380-83; Beale, Gideon Welles Diary, I, 529. Brackets are used in the original.

governor had already disclaimed any interest in any other elective positions that previous September in conversations with Charles Dana, the president probably welcomed the opportunity to look the Tennessean over himself, to question, to evaluate, and to measure.[138] Here surely was a man of national stature, a potential rival or a potent friend, depending on the circumstances. With Johnson's Washington friends promoting him as a vice presidential candidate, how could the president fail to take notice?[139]

In a move that allegedly may have helped shape the Tennessean's future, the chief executive had already dispatched Major General Daniel E. Sickles on a southern tour "principally for observation and information" shortly after Johnson arrived in Washington. Although he was primarily assigned to various river ports like Memphis, Helena, Vicksburg, and New Orleans, he was permitted to visit "such intermediate points" as deemed appropriate. Everywhere he was to evaluate the various reconstruction efforts in the states and sections under Federal control. Lincoln desired to know "how the Amnesty proclamation works, if at all" and requested that Sickles "learn what you can as to the colored people--how they get along as soldiers, as laborers in our service, on leased plantations, and as hired laborers with their old masters."[140] Thereafter the purpose of the Sickles itinerary

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[138]Dana to Stanton, September 8, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XXX, pt. 1, p. 183.

[139]See, for example, Nashville Dispatch, February 25, 1864.

[140]Lincoln to Daniel E. Sickles, February 15, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 185; Sickles to Lincoln, May 17, 1864, Lincoln Papers.

dissolved into mystery and speculation, particularly as it related to Andrew Johnson. Nearly three decades later the general, himself, would claim that his mission had been essentially "diplomatic," designed to persuade the military governor to ease the rigors of his rule and bring them more in line with the policies of Lincoln.

> Without going into details, I will say that my object was to see if the general character of his administration as Governor could not be modified to come more nearly to Mr. Lincoln's ideas. I did the work that I was sent to do to the best of my ability, and reported direct to President Lincoln, going to the White House immediately on my return to Washington and telling him the situation as I had found it.[141]

However, Benjamin C. Truman, the military governor's political operative and self-styled publicist, recalled a different version. During May, 1864, following Sherman's victory at Resaca, Georgia, Truman, while in Nashville, encountered an old friend, a special correspondent of the New York Herald then traveling with General Sickles. The Herald man explained that Sickles was on an important mission related to Andrew Johnson.

> "He has come down here to look after Johnson."
> "To look after Johnson?" I repeated, in great astonishment.
> "Yes, to look after Johnson. To see what he is doing. To look into his habits. The President wants Johnson on the ticket with him if his habits will permit; and the general has been sent here to investigate." [142]

According to Truman, the military governor was the president's first choice but he conceded that Sickles might not have been advised

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[141] New York Times, July 10, 1891

[142] Truman, "Anecdotes of Andrew Johnson," 437.

completely of Lincoln's purposes, since the chief executive may have been still "undecided in his own mind."[143] Nevertheless, Truman immediately communicated his astonishing news at eleven o'clock that same evening to a very interested governor who received him in his private quarters. Sitting up in bed, Johnson told Truman to leave for Washington the following morning. "Go direct to Colonel Forney and repeat to him what you have said to me, and ask him to look out for my interests."[144]

If the New York Herald correspondent was posted on the nature of the Sickles visit, there is no evidence that he shared his scoop with his editors. The paper made no mention of Lincoln's preferences prior to the convention and, like other journals, seemed genuinely caught by surprise by the delegates' eventual choice.[145] Moreover, Forney's Philadelphia Press, which had supported the Lincoln war policies (unlike the Herald), remained noncommittal on the vice presidency until the Tennessee Unionist had the nomination in hand, suggesting that the publisher expected the nod to go to Hamlin or

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[143]Truman to Alexander K. McClure, July 25, 1891, Alexander K. McClure, Abraham Lincoln and Men of War-Times: Some Personal Recollections of War and Politics During the Lincoln Administration (Philadelphia, 1892), 443-44.

[144]Truman, "Anecdotes of Andrew Johnson," 437. Sometime before the convention, Truman claimed that he called upon Lincoln to press for Johnson, advising the president that friends of the Tennessean desired the nomination for Johnson and revealing that Parson Brownlow would be soon made governor and David Patterson and Joseph Fowler would become the state's two new senators. Truman to Editor, July 11, 1891, New York Times, July 13, 1891

[145]See New York Herald, June 9, 1864; Chicago Tribune, June 8-9, 1864.

some other contender.[146] Assuming that Forney promoted the Johnson ticket (and he evidently did), he probably was working through his contacts at the convention rather than tipping his hand through the newspaper columns.[147]

When the convention opened in Baltimore on June 7, Lincoln was in complete control, although a disaffected group of radicals, idealists, and soreheads had already put up John C. Frémont as the "Radical Democracy" candidate at a rump convention in Cleveland. McClellan's managers waited in the wings, planning to nominate him in a conservative and Democratic love feast later in August at Chicago. However, Lincoln and his operatives had so skillfully controlled the various state delegations that even the mutinous elements of the party were resigned to the president's renomination which would come by acclamation.[148] With Lincoln presumably noncommittal about his running mate (a circumstance which surely could only reduce Hannibal Hamlin's chances), the field was open for Andrew Johnson. The advantage that might be drawn from such a balanced ticket, a midwestern Republican for president and a southern Democrat for vice president, both endorsing a platform calling for an unconditional surrender of the Confederacy and an amendment to the constitution emancipating

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[146]Philadelphia Press, June 7, 8, 1864.

[147]However, in the pre-convention maneuvering in the key state of New York, the War Democrats expressed support for a number of party figures, including Forney, himself, as well as Johnson, Daniel S. Dickinson--and, interestingly enough, Daniel E. Sickles. See Chicago Tribune, June 2, 1864.

[148]Oates, Abraham Lincoln, 388.

the slaves, would surely be a guiding factor in Johnson's eventual selection.

If most persons were surprised when the new nominee turned out to be the Tennessee military governor, many of Johnson's friends and opponents were not. Almost a month prior to the Baltimore convention, a local conservative organ observed that "certain persons in the so-called state of West Virginia" had recommended the governor to be Lincoln's running-mate. Insisting that Johnson would not have the support of Tennesseans, the commentator, nevertheless, saw a bright spot should he be elected. "As President of the Senate he is likely to do less mischief than he is doing here."[149] Many of the other Tennessee conservatives must have shared these same mixed emotions.

Why was Johnson selected? There appear to be many parts to the puzzle, none of which alone can precisely account for the final climactic moment on the first ballot when he received enough votes to be nominated. The Tennessean's good fortune seemed partially based on the president's need to maintain harmony and stability in his cabinet. Earlier Hannibal Hamlin had run afoul of Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, supposedly treating him "discourteously" over a patronage matter "so much so as to attract attention and inquiry, and lead to opposition to his renomination."[150] Already troubled by the Pomeroy Circular and Chase's open interest in succeeding him as

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[149]Nashville Press, May 18, 1864.

[150]Beale, Gideon Welles Diary, II, 46-47.

president, the rail splitter did not need further controversy in a government already divided and faction-ridden.

There was also the matter of William H. Seward, whose support of policies that would expeditiously restore the southern states to the Union, had alienated Charles Sumner and other radicals. Under the guise of nominating a War Democrat to give a bipartisan basis to the newly named National Union party, Senator Sumner and his minions supported the nomination of Daniel S. Dickinson of New York, hoping that if he were chosen, Lincoln could be pressured to drop Seward, also a New Yorker, lest that state then be over-represented in the administration.[151] If Johnson were nominated, the radical cabal would be checkmated. He was pre-eminently a War Democrat whose southern roots gave further credibility to the concept of a National Union Coalition. And Seward's job would be preserved. This surely explains the secretary of state's support of the Tennessean at the convention when he realized the reason for the growing opposition to Hamlin among radical delegates.[152]

From the very beginning, this plot seemed to backfire to Johnson's advantage. Although Massachusetts' efforts to pressure the other states into supporting a War Democrat made good sense if New York could be persuaded to support Dickinson, the Sumner ploy

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[151] Glyndon G. Van Deusen, William Henry Seward (New York, 1967), 394-96; Charles Eugene Hamlin, The Life and Times of Hannibal Hamlin (Cambridge, Mass., 1899), 460-89.

[152] See New York Herald, June 7-9, 1864; Beale, Gideon Welles Diary, II, 47.

depended on selling the idea to a delegation that was strongly influenced by Seward and Henry J. Raymond, of the New York Times, both strong administration supporters.[153] Moreover, Johnson himself demonstrated enough popularity in the ranks of the state's own War Democrats in pre-convention balloting to provide important and popular competition in this large and influential group, thereby reducing the hapless Dickinson's chances still further. In the initial caucusing of the New York delegation in the early hours at the Baltimore convention, Hamlin has 28 votes; Dickinson 16, and Johnson 4. At this point Hamlin seemed assured of the vice presidential nomination. However, the Massachusetts delegation sent a message to the New York delegation sometime between 10:00 and 11:00 p.m., the first evening (June 6), indicating that the convention should nominate a War Democrat. The next morning the New York delegation balloted again, giving Johnson 32 votes, Dickinson 26, and Hamlin 8. Hamlin's support was eroding and Dickinson would not finish strongly. Combined with Johnson's

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[153]Alexander K. McClure, one of the minor participants at the historic proceedings and later editor of the Philadelphia Times, described Raymond as "the Lincoln leader and the master-spirit of the Baltimore Convention of 1864." According to McClure, the New York Times editor framed and reported the platform, chaired the National Committee, wrote Lincoln's campaign biography, and secured a majority for Johnson in the state delegation against New York's own Dickinson. Furthermore, McClure (who also disputed Lincoln's secretary John G. Nicolay's claim that the president really preferred Hamlin) insisted that he himself was a member of the White House "inner Council." "I saw Abraham Lincoln at all hours of the day and night during his Presidential service," he said. Johnson was Lincoln's choice on the eve of the convention. McClure, Abraham Lincoln, 444; New York Tribune, July 9, 1981; see also Beale, Gideon Welles Diary, II, 47.

expected support from the border states, the New York vote would be a powerful ingredient in his victory.[154]

Another basic component was provided by Johnson's own allies, the old relic, Parson Brownlow, and Tennessee's attorney general, Horace Maynard. Both men made impassioned speeches that were instrumental in arousing the convention's support for seating the Tennessee delegation originally and rallying the needed votes behind the tailor. The Parson, who closeted himself with the military governor in a strategy session in Nashville prior to traveling to Baltimore, was deathly "sick, sick," to use his own words, having been unable to eat in several days and so feeble that he had to be helped up and down the platform to make his remarks. However, his short peroration was a masterpiece, pleading for the seating of the Tennessee delegation, lest the convention recognize secession by excluding his fellow citizens. He scorned the recently adjourned Cleveland gathering of the "Radical Democracy" that nominated John C. Frémont, and cast ridicule on the upcoming Conservative and Democratic conclaves in Chicago. "We are for the Baltimore - Lincoln - arming of Negroes - Convention," he declared. He concluded to waves of applause by invoking the name of Andrew Johnson, admittedly his old opponent for the past twenty-four years. "For the first time in the Providence of

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[154]See Chicago Tribune, June 2, 3, 1864; Nashville Dispatch, June 16, 1864. Hamlin's grandson believed that Johnson's selection was part of "a vulgar conspiracy" to defraud the vice president, citing procedural irregularities such as false reporting of Iowa's votes and other incidents to show that his grandfather had been wrongly denied the nomination. He claimed that Lincoln did not really wish to have Johnson on the ticket but would have preferred "the old ticket." See Hamlin, Hannibal Hamlin, 476-82.

God, three years ago, we got together on the same platform," he recalled, "and we are now fighting the devil, Tom Walker, and Jeff Davis, side by side." His impromptu speech, which had been requested by various delegations when they discovered that he was in the hall that first evening, came just before the first session adjourned and surely imprinted the name of Andrew Johnson on their minds as they went to their various hotels, saloons, and caucus rooms.[155]

Maynard had already successfully pleaded for the seating of the Tennessee delegation, overriding the arguments that the convention could not accept the credentials of men from an unorganized state of rebellion. "The galleries were with the Tennesseans," one observer remarked. "The sufferings of the noble East Tennesseans, the gallantry of the State, the fame of Andrew Johnson," he recorded, "all combined to make every delegate wish to give them what they asked." Maynard's spirited oratory on behalf of the nomination of Andrew Johnson also struck a similar chord later with the delegates.[156] Described by a grandson of the defeated Hamlin as "a political classic," Maynard's description of the former tailor as a man who "stood in the furnace of treason" provided a powerful stimulus to the delegates assembled in Baltimore's Front Street Theatre. The Tennessee attorney general argued that the loyal governor of a border state would strengthen the Union ticket nationwide. Many delegations "undoubtedly" were

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[155]Nashville Press, June 3, 4, 1864; Philadelphia Press, June 8, 1864; Chicago Tribune, June 8, 11, 1864.

[156]Cincinnati Gazette, quoted in Nashville Dispatch, June 15, 1864; Chattanooga Gazette, June 15, 1864.

swayed by Maynard's histrionics which had a "decisive effect on the convention."[157] In fact, Burton C. Cook, chairman of the Illinois delegation and presumably close to the president, credited Maynard with swaying the convention. "It was that speech by Maynard that defeated Hamlin," Cook recalled. "He spoke in the most passionate way of the great sufferings" of the "Union men living in the South" provoking "wild and patriotic applause." Maynard's "rattling speech" was "followed by a stampede from our ranks by the Hamlin men." With Illinois Republicans expressing support for Johnson, other delegates followed suit, presuming correctly that the action had the president's blessing.[158]

In fact, the Tennessean was probably deemed a good choice by his Republican allies for reasons of state. Southern agents were in Europe during this period, constantly arguing that the South truly desired independence and that the Lincoln administration was a sectional government without a national following. Johnson was a true southerner. His presence on the National Union ticket would be a living refutation of this argument. How much influence such reasoning had on the movers and shakers of the Republican convention will never be known. Alexander K. McClure, the party functionary and self-styled White House intimate, insisted that it was one of the

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[157] Hamlin, Hannibal Hamlin, 476.

[158] New York Tribune, July 10, 1981. Cook, himself, always, however, insisted that Lincoln preferred Hamlin and would have been happy with the man from Maine.

considerations that encouraged Lincoln to look favorably upon the military governor.[159]

Finally, Lincoln needed a candidate who would help unify some of the less extreme elements of his coalition.[160] Although the military governor certainly dealt less harshly with the rebels than his reputation would suggest, Andrew Johnson had proved his mettle in the furnace of treason. Indeed certain northerners would have been pleased if the Tennessean, himself, had been selected for the presidency. "If anything can reconcile me to the renomination of Abraham Lincoln," one wrote, "it is the association of your name on the same ticket."[161] Presuming that others surely shared the same sentiments, the Lincoln men pinned their hopes on the Tennessee tailor with the expectation that he would help reunify the president's original constituency and assist in creating a new national consensus for the continuation of the embattled administration.[162]

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[159] McClure, Abraham Lincoln, 116-17; New York Tribune, July 9, 1891.

[160] Simon Cameron, Thaddeus Stevens, Henry Winter Davis, and others allegedly opposed the selection of Johnson. James B. Bingham to Johnson, June 26, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[161] Nathaniel P. Sawyer to Johnson, June 10, 1864; George L. Stearns to Johnson, June 9, 1864, ibid.

[162] During his earlier trip to Washington, Johnson had sought to assure former New York Senator Preston King and others in a conversation at the White House that he would be acceptable to the antislavery forces. Aware of their concern, a political supporter had spread the word that "they would have no occasion to regret favouring his nomination" on that account. George B. Lincoln to Johnson, June 11, 1864, ibid.

Upon receiving notice of his selection at Baltimore, Johnson, with the appropriate and requisite disclaimers, proudly responded to the news. "Not a man in all the land can truthfully say that I have asked him to use his influence in my behalf in that body, for the position alloted me, or for any other," he declared. "On the contrary, I have avoided the candidacy," the governor insisted but then grandly proclaimed that he would do his duty. "Come weal or woe, success or defeat, sink or swim, survive or perish, I accept the nomination."[163] He asserted that slavery could not be restored and vowed to prosecute the war until the Confederacy was destroyed.[164]

Although these were extraordinary times, presidential campaigns generally were waged by political surrogates, newspapers, and pamphleteers. Except for an occasional speech delivered to local partisans and numerous letters and other documents outlining positions aimed at a wider audience, candidates did not generally go on national tours promoting their own election. However, during the election of 1860, Stephen A. Douglas had broken this tradition in a vain effort to prevent the disruption of the old Democracy. Again, in the election of 1864, Andrew Johnson's supporters urged him to campaign actively, hoping that he could add the weight of his national prestige to defeat the Copperheads in close state contests as well as secure the success of the National Union ticket. "My whole heart congratulates you,"

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[163] Speech in Nashville, June 10, 1864, Nashville Times and True Union, June 11, 1864.

[164] Acceptance of Vice Presidential Nomination, July 2, 1864, Savage, Andrew Johnson, 297-300.

John W. Forney wrote. "You must come to Philadelphia, and be greeted at Independence [Hall]."[165] Others were fearful of defeat, citing the strength of the Copperheads. Some urged Johnson "to take the stump and make speeches in all the North in behalf of the cause."[166] In many of the tax-ridden and draft weary northern states politicians were frightened. A New Yorker spoke forebodingly of a general loss of idealism and support for the continuation of the war, advising the new nominee "to make an accidental journey thro this state" to answer the undisputed southern propaganda. "The situation of affairs here politically is at present unpromising & unpleasant--," he observed, warning that speculators, profiteers, and selfish politicians had discredited the war effort.[167] One of Indiana's hard pressed congressmen, Republican Schuyler Colfax, pleaded with the Tennessee Democrat to come to his own district and "perhaps save my election." Not only was his seat but the entire ticket in doubt since Indiana's soldiers could not vote in the field. "No man living could do us more good in this State than you," he swore.[168] Although the Tennessean eventually traveled to Indianapolis and spoke there and elsewhere, he

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[165]John W. Forney to Johnson, June 13, 1864, Cincinnati Commercial, January 14, 1878.

[166]James E. Bingham to Johnson, June 28, 1864; James H. Hagar to Johnson, July 17, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[167]Samuel Butterfield to Johnson, July 8, 1864, ibid.

[168]Schuyler Colfax to Johnson, August 17, 1864, ibid.

would be distracted by the political turmoil and local difficulties in his own state.[169]

Johnson had been in the cockpit of treason for over two years. On the surface he seemed to be proclaiming the same goals and intentions expressed earlier, symbolic both of the continuity of his own ideals and the great gulf between problems and solutions that he confronted. Although a world had been swept away between September, 1862, and September, 1864, and many of the old familiar landmarks nearly effaced, indelible reminders of the war's origin remained to poison the air and to disturb the landscape. Slavery was dying, but the Negroes endured, a mighty host of the deprived, disturbed, and disinherited, unwelcome reminders of the path of Mars and the march of Abraham's legions. The same issue that had divided the Republic also served to drive a wedge between the military governor and the conservative wing of the loyal coalition. Ironically, Andrew Johnson was now even more a stranger on native grounds than he had been when he left Tennessee in a hail of bullets and epithets in 1861. Gone was the support of men like Campbell, Lellyett, and Etheridge, alienated by their lack of influence in the Lincoln administration and the caustic purgative of emancipation. Stripped of allies on the right, he seemed to turn left and to embrace the radicalism of his remaining Tennessee supporters like Parson Brownlow. However, the intimacy would be more apparent than real and the anger of the

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[169] Johnson to J. W. Wright, August 21, 1864, Memphis Bulletin, September 15, 1864; Johnson to Godlove Stein Orth, [August ?], 1864, Johnson Collection; Nashville Times and True Union, October 13, 17, 1864.

radicals would be apocalyptic when they learned that the Tennessee tailor had mislead them concerning his intentions toward the rebels. However, that shock of recognition still lay in the future.[170] In the late autumn of 1864, the governor had one last stand in the breach.

With radicals and conservatives still debating the most sensitive questions of Tennessee's political status, the governor's friends published a call for a convention of loyal citizens to meet in Nashville on September 5, concerning the reorganization of the state. Johnson's Greeneville crony, Sam Milligan, was appointed president when the convention assembled. The conservatives failed to show up in any strength, allowing the resolutions to be written by administration men. "This was the game we played on them at Knoxville in April last," observed a disturbed William B. Carter, whose relationship with the Lincoln government had deteriorated since his bridge-burning plots of 1861. "I must confess that I feel rather provoked at the truly loyal men because they did not send delegates to the Convention."[171]

The convention reported a series of resolutions that formed the mechanism for the transition of Tennessee from rebellion to a return to the Union. One called for a future convention that could

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[170] Even the grim Charles Sumner momentarily warmed to the Tennessean, inviting him North ("I am sure that you will have a true welcome"). Sumner to Johnson, September 10, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[171] American Annual Cyclopaedia, IV, 764; William B. Carter to William B. Campbell, September 18, 1862, Campbell Papers.

amend the state constitution to free the slaves. Others dealt with the coming presidential election, allowing soldiers and other free white men, having at least six months' residence, to vote in the contest. That the convention was an administration gathering was reflected in its endorsement of the governor's policies and its urging the use of a test oath that would be prima facie evidence (subject to contrary information) that a person was loyal.[172] Thus the stage was set for Johnson's final watch in his home state, just months away from tragedy, triumph, and turmoil in the White House.

Besought by various northern politicos to lend his roughhewn charisma to the cause, Johnson journeyed briefly to Indiana while his opponents in Tennessee fumed at his proscriptive test oath. "The idea at the bottom of all this opposition is," the governor told a Logansport audience on October 4, "that the man who rises up from the mass of the people, the man who advocates the doctrine that man is capable of self-government, has virtue and intelligence to govern himself, should be repudiated."[173] Tennessee conservatives deplored the growing strength of the Lincoln-Johnson ticket and speculated on the future. "They may rule with a rod of iron, and break in pieces all who oppose them," William B. Carter confided to ex-governor Campbell, declaring "they may turn loose millions of ignorant negroes to riot over their freedom, and to devour land; but will this amount

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[172] Nashville Press, September 9, 10, 1864; American Annual Cyclopaedia, IV, 764-65.

[173] Henry J. Raymond to Johnson, September 11, 1864, Johnson Papers; Speech at Logansport, Indiana, October 4, 1864, New York Tribune, October 10, 1864.

to restoring that noble & harmonious union you and I loved so well?"[174]

Realizing that the combination of test oath and control of the ballot boxes meant a victory for the administration, Lellyett, Campbell, and others resolved to embarrass the White House by calling attention to the rigorous requirements of the loyalty oath and Johnson's proscriptive methods.[175] After traveling to Washington with a protest signed by Campbell, Nelson, Etheridge, and others, including himself, Lellyett received an audience with Lincoln and presented his complaint. "May I inquire how long it took you and the New York politicians to concoct that paper?" the president asked, sarcastically. Lellyett responded that none but Tennesseans participated in the communication. Knowing that Lellyett's mission was a publicity stunt, Lincoln observed that "I expect to let the friends of George B. McClellan manage their side of this contest in their own way; and I will manage my side of it MY way."[176] Thus the president once more refused to overrule the Tennessee provisional governor and signaled to Johnson's friends and foes alike that the tailor politician enjoyed his confidence and support.

Johnson's spirited electioneering still bore the stamp of his own imprimatur, linking the opposition with treason and civil war.

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[174]Carter to Campbell, October 5, 1864, Campbell Papers.

[175]Jordan Stokes to Campbell, September 28, 1864, ibid.

[176]Nashville Press, October 21, 1864; Lincoln to William B. Campbell and others, October 22, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VIII, 58n; New York World, October 18, 1864.

"The pseudo Democratic party is the rebel party of the United States," he told a Louisville audience, insisting that its present leadership consciously sought to aid Jeff Davis and the Confederacy. However, Andrew Johnson was still committed to the true principles of the party of Jackson and he derided the present Democracy's leading light.

> I know Mr. McClellan well. He falls far below mediocrity; a very nice little gentleman. When you try to grip him, he is so small you can't find him; he is so little there's no place to whip him on. What there is of him is what Mr. Lincoln has made him. If any part of the war is a "failure," it is that which little Mac conducted.[177]

Angered by Johnson's words and deeds, especially by his notorious rabble-rousing speech to the Nashville freedmen during a torch-lit parade, an anonymous and scarcely literate critic sent him a venomous letter, pungently berating and threatening the Tennessee chief executive. Denouncing him as an abolition devil and a scoundrel, the unknown correspondent warned the governor to make the best of his time, advising him to "go it Andy this is your day," but reminded him that "ev[e]ry dog has his day." After a number of threats ranging from a noose to tar and feathers, Johnson's adversary ended the letter with a flourish, derisively adopting the nom de plume "Jeff Davis."[178]

Despite the threats of his opponents and the efforts of rebel guerrillas to disrupt the election, the Lincoln-Johnson ticket would be triumphant in Tennessee.[179] The results were never in doubt since

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[177]Speech in Louisville, October 14, 1864, Chattanooga Gazette, October 23, 1864; Nashville Times and True Union, October 17, 1864.

[178]Anonymous to Johnson, October 24, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[179]See Joseph H. Blackburn to Johnson, October 30, 1864; L. C. Houk to Johnson, October 31, 1864, ibid.

the test oath was designed automatically to exclude those favoring McClellan's negotiated settlement policy. In Shelby County, for example, the McClellan-Pendleton ticket received only twenty-four of 1,603 votes cast.[180] Similarly, Nashville conservatives managed to cast only twenty-five of 1,342 votes, revealing that the McClellan supporters were either intimidated or deliberately boycotted the election rather than take the governor's hated oath.[181] Horace Greeley had already dismissed the whole episode, declaring that the Copperhead opposition to Johnson's test oath was absurd and immaterial since Tennessee could not participate legally in the presidential election.[182] Congress agreed with Greeley and later rejected the electoral votes of Tennessee on the grounds that the state was still in rebellion on election day, 1864.[183] Some skeptics even raised questions about the legality of a vice president being elected from a state considered out of the Union![184]

Whatever constitutional qualms the governor had about the legality of his own position remained subordinated to the conviction that the end justified the means. This attitude would be paramount in his final efforts to reorganize a state government so that his

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[180]James B. Bingham to Johnson, November 9, 1864, ibid.

[181]Hall, Andrew Johnson, 156; Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 48.

[182]New York Tribune, October 19, 1864.

[183]Cong. Globe, 38 Cong., 2 sess., 522, 533-34, 548, 574, 608, 711.

[184]Nashville Press, January 21, 1865.

beloved Tennessee would be safely in the charge of his Union friends when he journeyed to Washington. On November 12, the so-called East Tennessee Union Committee called for a preliminary state convention to be held in Nashville on December 19, for the purpose of nominating a Union ticket for a constitutional convention.[185] This new burst of activity was coincidental with a Confederate winter offensive which began in East Tennessee with the surprise attack on General Gillem's governor's guard and resulted in "a terror-stricken stampede" of loyalists when Gillem fell back on Knoxville. More than 3,000 men, women, and children fled to Chattanooga to escape the rebels. The harassed officials even sent a number on to Nashville when the over-taxed refugee centers in Chattanooga could not provide enough shelter and supplies for those who had abandoned their homes.[186]

Nevertheless, the Unionists tried to cope with marauding guerrillas and continue the restoration of the state. "We will send up a delegation of good, true, and able men," promised a West Tennessee loyal leader, preparing for the coming convention.[187] However, the Confederate army under Hood made one last sortie into Tennessee, threatening Nashville in a futile attempt to draw Sherman

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[185]The committee consisted of Samuel R. Rodgers, Robert K. Byrd, Perez Dickinson, William G. Brownlow, and David T. Patterson. Philadelphia Press, November 19, 1864; Nashville Union, November 18, 1864.

[186]William G. Brownlow to Johnson, November 14, 1864; Mrs. Horace Maynard to Johnson, November 14, 1864, Johnson Papers; Nashville Union, November 25, 1864; Hall, Andrew Johnson, 157; Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 48-49.

[187]James B. Bingham to Johnson, November 25, 1864, Johnson Papers.

away from Georgia. This final bitter contest was preceded by a period of intense cold, ice storms, and heavy rain. Not until the weather moderated did General Thomas make the long delayed counter-attack to drive Hood's broken and demoralized army back into Alabama.[188] Nashville was saved for the last time. A jubilant governor reported the victory, proclaiming that "Hood[']s Army has been whipped and routed, 'horse[,] foot[,] and dragoon.[']" After many months of anguish he finally could say proudly, "all is working right."[189]

The path was now clear to proceed with the reorganization of the state government. The Union convention originally scheduled to meet on December 19 finally met on January 9, 1865. Conservative opposition was easily voted down and the convention came under the domination of the administration. Ignoring the irregular character and certain extra-legality of their proceedings, the delegates, often self-appointed, set about to draft constitutional amendments and other regulations without waiting for a regular constitutional convention. Radicals gained control of the business committee, finally submitting four resolutions which reflected their blueprint for the future. The first abolished slavery; the second prohibited that state legislature from recognizing "the right of property in man"; the third made the state supreme court justices, the attorney-general, and reporter appointive rather than elective; and the fourth

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[188]Horn, Battle of Nashville, 43, 58-59; Hall, Andrew Johnson, 158-59; Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 49.

[189]Johnson to Brownlow, December 22, 1864, Johnson Collection.

enfranchised Negro soldiers and presumably other blacks competent to testify in court, and permanently disfranchised all Confederate civil, judicial, and other officials unable to prove their loyalty.[190]

Recognizing that the convention was treading on dangerous ground, the governor dramatically appeared before the delegates on the evening of January 12, ostensibly at their request. He took note of the extraordinary nature of the gathering, observing that the delegates acted "in the capacity of a primary convention" but counseled restraint and common sense. "In making these efforts, why be divided? Agree on two or three simple propositions; defer your quarrels until you get a government to quarrel in. The sooner you get law and order the better for yourselves and the nation." Noting that slavery was already "an itinerant institution," he advocated a constitutional amendment freeing the slaves. "Settle the nigger question," he urged, but otherwise he counseled moderation. "Leave franchise out of the question; but if you want a certain class disqualified as voters, say so; but do not put it in your Constitution." However, he clearly did not wish to appear to be coddling the traitors, especially the rebel leadership. "It would be well if, in the adjustment of our laws, we would arrange it, that the property of rich rebels, which is confiscated, should go to reimburse impoverished Union men, of whose present distress they were the immediate and remote cause."[191]

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[190]Hall, Andrew Johnson, 159-65.

[191]Speech to Union State Convention, January 12, 1865, Nashville Union, January 13, 1865.

Despite the expected and superfluous threats to impoverish wealthy traitors, the governor was clearly steering a middle course. Enfranchisement of the freedmen represented too large a dose of radical ideology for Johnson to swallow. Although he was just months away from the White House, obviously he had already drawn a line beyond which he would not proceed. The seeds of conflict between Andrew Johnson and the radicals were already taking root.

Johnson's speech was decisive. The business committee withdrew its original report and re-submitted it without the third and fourth amendments. Although moderates and conservatives tried to prevent the report's final adoption, the administration forces carried the day and the proposed amendments were approved for various military and civil appointments of the provisional governor and provided for their continuation until successors could be regularly elected or appointed. The people would be summoned to vote on the proposed amendments on February 22, 1865, and, upon adoption of the amendments, special elections could be held on March 4, for governor and the state legislature. The officials thus selected would serve until the regular biennial election of 1867.[192] The Johnson-Lincoln plan for the restoration of Tennessee was thus "officially" endorsed.

The convention then proceeded to establish the machinery by which the elections would be held. All voters, except those known to be unconditional Union men, would have to take the governor's ironclad

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[192]Hall, Andrew Johnson, 169-70; Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 49.

oath.[193] The name of each voter would be written across the back of his ticket and the tickets filed with the county clerk for future reference. Soldiers might vote wherever they were stationed on election day. The convention then nominated candidates for governor and the legislature. Although various other candidates might have been considered, clearly the choice of the convention and others was the peerless Parson Brownlow.[194] In his short speech of acceptance the irrepressible Brownlow promised to end the guerrilla warfare plaguing the state if it meant hanging every bushwhacker involved. The convention closed its deliberations with another series of resolutions, urging that the Parson be made a brigadier general and the military governor in the anticipated interim between Johnson's expected retirement and the March elections. When a final committee report proclaimed Tennessee no longer in rebellion, the convention adjourned, having laid the basis for the restoration of a state government.[195] That the legal basis of the new proposed Brownlow regime was as shaky as the provisional government it was to replace seemed to escape the notice of the partisans looking toward the new day in Tennessee.

Although Johnson happily communicated his satisfaction to the president ("Thank God that the tyrant[']s rod has been broken--"),

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[193]Nashville Press, January 30, 1865; Nashville Union, January 29, 1865.

[194]Nashville Times and True Union, January 16, 1865; Hall, Andrew Johnson, 171; James B. Bingham to Johnson, November 25, 1864, Johnson Papers.

[195]Hall, Andrew Johnson, 171-72.

the state still faced grave challenges when the delegates returned home.[196] Since December, Congress had been debating a series of memorials and proposals relating to reconstruction and the recognition of the newly restored government of Louisiana.[197] With the situation looking bleak for reconstruction along the lines that the governor and the president preferred, he hoped that Tennessee might be allowed to rejoin her rightful place alongside the loyal states. Barring some unforeseen reversal in the field, he promised the president that "the state will be redeemed and the foul blot of Slavery erased from her escutcheon--."[198] He had done all that he could to insure the acceptance of Tennessee by a forgiving nation. Her future now depended on forces beyond Andrew Johnson's control. His political ally and publicist, John W. Forney, had already warned the governor that Tennessee faced formidable opposition when the state sought readmission. Knowing that Johnson had always denied the possibility of secession and hence the need for reconstruction, Forney readily identified the chief adversary to this point of view but perhaps underestimated the strength of his support. "The only person that I find opposed to your theory, and who is now hesitating as to the true course to be pursued in reference to the admission of Louisiana, is Mr. Sumner of Massachusetts," he confided. Then he conceded that

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[196] Johnson to Lincoln, January 13, 1865, Lincoln Papers.

[197] Hans L. Trefousse, The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice (Baton Rouge, 1968), 301-2.

[198] Johnson to Lincoln, January 13, 1865, Lincoln Papers.

perhaps a few more allies of Sumner could be found, Benjamin F. Wade, Minnesota Senator Morton S. Wilkinson, and Zachariah Chandler.[199] Thus on the eve of new challenges and responsibilities, Johnson could take comfort that he had laid the foundation for the restoration of Tennessee. However, he surely also had an understanding of the magnitude of the problems to be encountered when he turned his face toward Washington.

The election was held on George Washington's birthday, February 22, and the amendments ratified by a vote of 25, 293 to 48. Since this vote represented more than 10 percent of the state vote in 1860, it complied with the terms of Lincoln's amnesty proclamation of December 8, 1863. William G. Brownlow was inaugurated on April 5, and Tennessee was restored to civil government.[200]

In the final hectic weeks remaining before he left for Washington, Johnson busied himself with the last details of his administration, approving passes, receiving petitions, appointing officials, setting up the election machinery, and working with the transition from his provisional government to the Brownlow regime which would assume office on the first Monday in April.[201] "I would rather have

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[199]Forney to Johnson, January 7, 1865, Johnson Papers.

[200]Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction, 49-50.

[201]See, for example, Johnson to Lizinka Brown, January 24, 1865, RG 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records; E. Kelley to Johnson, January 19, 1865; Johnson to Nashville Union Citizens, January 23, 1865; James B. Bingham to Johnson, February 10, 1865; Proclamation for Elections, January 25, 1865, Johnson Papers.

the pleasures and honor of turning over the State, organized, to the people properly Constituted, than be Vice President of the United States," he told Abraham Lincoln. Hoping that he could be allowed to remain in place until the newly elected state officials assumed their responsibilities, he asked to be allowed to miss the inaugural in Washington and to take the oath later.[202] However, the president was adamant, declaring that he and the cabinet agreed that "it is unsafe for you not to be here on the 4th of March."[203]

Amid rumors that his life was in danger from guerrilla bands aiming to ambush his train, he reluctantly left Nashville in the latter part of February, accompanied by his own Governor's Guard as far as Louisville. There he left them with the promise to return in a few weeks to continue the fight against treason and rebellion.[204] Sick, apparently with a fever, before he left Tennessee, Johnson arrived in Washington, worn, weary, and worried about Tennessee and his new responsibilities. On his way to the Senate chambers to take the oath of office, he rode, as was the custom, in the carriage of Hannibal Hamlin, the outgoing vice president. En route to the ceremonies, he told Hamlin that he was ill and that his physician had prescribed whiskey. Hamlin instead produced a bottle of brandy when they reached the Senate chambers.[205] When Johnson got up to speak, the resulting

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[202]Johnson to Lincoln, January 17, 1865, Lincoln Papers.

[203]Lincoln to Johnson, January 25, 1865, Johnson Papers.

[204]Nashville Times and True Union, February 28, 1865.

[205]Winston, Andrew Johnson, 262-65.

spectacle surely made Hamlin partisans feel that they had been partially avenged for having the vice presidency taken from their champion. Even a Hamlin opponent, Gideon Welles, noted that "the retiring Vice President appeared to advantage when contrasted with his successor who has humiliated his friends."[206] Lincoln, who had defended Grant and perhaps others from similar charges, dismissed the episode. "Oh well," said Lincoln, "don't you bother about Andy Johnson's drinking. He made a bad slip the other day, but I have known Andy a good many years, and he ain't no drunkard."[207]

Thus the unlikely partnership which had flourished so unexpectedly with such mutual benefits seemed to come full circle and climax on a discordant note. Nevertheless, even in this final episode of extreme humiliation and mortification, the rail splitter remained loyal and supportive to the tailor from East Tennessee. It had been three long years almost to the day that the collaboration began in earnest. It obviously had not been a Jefferson-Madison or even a Nixon-Kissinger partnership, since these examples represented the union of similar political ideologies and world views. However, the Lincoln-Johnson collaboration meant that men sharing only the most basic political goals, like preserving the Union, could unite for the hazards of the moment and cooperate for the good of the nation. Lincoln, who was gradually surrendering on nearly every major issue to the radicals, needed some of Johnson's will; and the Tennessean

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[206]Beale, Gideon Welles Diary, II, 252. This citation omits Welles' superfluous annotations.

[207]Quoted in Winston, Andrew Johnson, 206.

whose iron resolve and quick temper would lead him into a carnival of conflict with the ultras of the administration, surely could have profited from the president's tact and grace.[208] Had either man borne more of the other's more pronounced virtues the nation almost certainly would have been better served.

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[208] A contemporary, unimpressed by Lincoln's capitulation to the radicals, strongly urged Johnson to become "the power behind the throne," to embolden the president, and to aid him in those areas where he was "irresolute, inactive, or deficient." James B. Bingham, February 10, 1865, Johnson Papers. Even a recent scholar friendly to Lincoln portrays the president as a pragmatist, gradually conceding on the major reconstruction issues, eventually moving toward enfranchisement of the blacks before he was assassinated. Trefousse, Radical Republicans, 266-304.

CHAPTER VI

THE TARNISHED SCEPTRE

One hot day in early July, 1862, the Tennessee governor received a request for assistance from one of his Indiana allies, Republican Congressman Schuyler Colfax, beset by Copperhead Democrats and uncertain of his own re-election. Hopeful that a "few lines from you would be of great value in swelling my vote," Colfax relayed a compliment accorded the Tennessean by a highly placed Washington official. "The President has told me twice that, while he has had troublesome questions to settle from other Military Governors & officers, as in North Carolina, New Orleans & c, 'Andy Johnson' had never embarrassed him in the slightest degree." Indeed the Tennessee governor enjoyed the president's "fullest confidence."[1] In retrospect Colfax's observation seemed to be an accurate assessment of the sense of trust and true dependency that characterized Lincoln's attitude toward Andrew Johnson and his blighted and flawed effort to restore his adopted state. It should not, however, be construed as a token of the president's faith in the wisdom of using military governors in general. By 1864 the difficulties associated with provisional governments in North Carolina, Louisiana, and Arkansas caused him to oppose

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[1]Schuyler Colfax to Johnson, July 5, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 541.

further employment of military governors in the restoration process.[2]

In truth, Johnson's time in the Tennessee cockpit, as crisis-ridden and desperate as it seemed to contemporaries, was free from many of the problems and political gaffes that plagued the other provisional governments. Despite the fact that his state was the scene of more Civil War battles than any other (except the oft-bloodied soil of the Old Dominion) and that he had managed to establish only the flimsiest foundation for a restored Tennessee, Andrew Johnson hammered adversity into a talisman that shielded his flaws from his friends and reduced the complaints of his enemies to carping impotence. Certainly he was far from successful in achieving the grand design that he brought to Nashville, that of returning Tennessee to the hands of her friends and "vindicating the violated majesty of the law," and restoring "her ancient government, without distinction of party-affiliations or past political opinions or action."[3] Yet, he had nurtured the flickering spark of the Union faith and ideology, maintained the primacy of the Federal government, and set in motion the engine of Tennessee's eventual restoration--all with a heavy-

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[2]In January, 1864, the president told a visiting Arkansas delegation that he would not re-appoint a military governor in their state but entrust the civil and military administration to the commander of the Department of Arkansas. Lincoln explained that "the experience of the past had proved that there was constant conflict between military governors and military commanders, which was injurious to the interests under their charge." Remarks to Arkansas Delegation, January 22, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 144.

[3]Appeal to the People of Tennessee, March 18, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 211.

handed skill that allowed him to seize the main chance. His contemporaries holding similar positions in the other provisional governments would be neither as resourceful nor so fortunate in their time of trials.

Unlike Johnson, the provisional governor of North Carolina, Edward Stanly, was not appointed a brigadier general nor confirmed by the Senate. Stanly, an old-line Whig congressman and Beaufort County native, had the misfortune of antagonizing the radicals almost immediately upon arriving in the state to assume his new position.[4] That Lincoln had not consulted the Senate as in the case of Andrew Johnson made his errors even more grievous to the disgruntled abolitionists who regarded reconstruction as a congressional prerogative.

Appointed in early April, 1862, Stanly, who had previously moved to California on the heels of the gold rush, returned to his home state on May 26 as military governor. The Federal occupation of the Albemarle, Pamlico, and other coastal regions of eastern North Carolina coincided with more significant Union successes in West and Middle Tennessee, the Louisiana delta, and northwestern Arkansas.[5] Activated by his premise that the so-called Confederate states

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[4]Unless otherwise noted, the foregoing sketch of Stanly's administration is drawn from Norman D. Brown, Edward Stanly: Whiggery's Tarheel "Conqueror" (University, Ala., 1974), 201-76, and passim.

[5]The ill-fated Stanly administration was not the only Union organization claiming to represent the loyal population. Maine-born Charles H. Foster, an erstwhile Breckinridge Democrat and one-time member of the Knights of the Golden Circle, and a Virginia Methodist minister, Marble Taylor, organized a tiny Union movement on Hatteras Island which had been captured by the Federal forces in late August, 1861. The so-called Hatteras Convention (November 18, 1861) proclaimed

remained in the Union although out of their original relationship, the president had selected Stanly "to re-establish the authority of the Federal Government in the State of North Carolina and provide the means of maintaining peace and security to the loyal inhabitants of that State until they shall be able to establish a civil government."[6] Almost immediately Stanly enraged the radical critics of the Lincoln administration when he arrived at his duties at New Bern by ordering Vincent Colyer, the army's "superintendent of the poor," to close two evening schools for Negroes which he operated there. Colyer, a former Washington hospital missionary and agent for the New York YMCA, ignored the governor's advice not to act hastily and abruptly closed the black schools, enraging the New England soldiers stationed in the New Bern area. Radical ire was further raised when the hapless Stanly permitted a slaveholder, one Nicholas Bray (upon his promise to take the oath) to recover a female servant, allegedly being held against her will in an army encampment. Highly indignant

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Taylor provisional governor, nullified the secession ordinance, and held a congressional election. Foster spent the rest of the war trying unsuccessfully to be seated as a bona fide U. S. representative and attempting to raise troops. See Norman C. Delaney, "Charles Henry Foster and the Unionists of Eastern North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, XXXVII (1960), 348-66. .

[6]Edwin M. Stanton to Stanly, May 20, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, IX, 397. Stanly's appointment theoretically gave his state two antagonistic and competing administrations. Whereas the Federal army had displaced the Confederate state government in Tennessee and sent the governor, legislature, and other officials into more or less permanent adjournment, the Tarheel Confederates held control of their capital of Raleigh and maintained an active government throughout most of the war. Joseph G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina (New York, 1914), 25-105, and passim.

press coverage denounced the governor's motives and served to discredit him hardly before he had settled into his job. "We are glad to hear that President LINCOLN does not sustain the action of GOV. STANLY in closing the schools for freed Negroes and in returning fugitive slaves to rebel owners," the New York Times editorialized. Correctly observing that the Tarheel wished only "to dispel the prevalent fear that the National Government intends to interfere with slavery," the editor criticized him for feeling bound to enforce laws offensive to the public sense of justice and morality. "It is one thing to leave slavery alone, and quite another to undertake the positive maintenance of its authority and the execution of its worst atrocities."[7] Greeley's New York Tribune was even less charitable. Its correspondent depicted the Bray affair as a blatant gesture of pro-slavery appeasement which perpetuated a great moral injustice by allowing unreliable persons to take careless oaths. "As they had taken a great many oaths before and broken them, this was no great matter of hindrance, so long as they could get their niggers."[8] Charles Sumner, to whom Colyer had immediately carried his story upon arrival in Washington, complained to the president and told the Senate that any laws by the rebel states "repugnant to reason and equity" must be rejected. "If any person, in the name of the United States, has undertaken to close a school for little children, whether white or black," he declared, "in the name of the Constitution, of

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[7]New York Times, June 6, 1862.

[8]New York Tribune, June 4, 1862.

humanity, and of common sense, I protest against such impiety under sanction of the United States."[9] Stanly fueled the fires of the opposition still further by imperiously ordering Hardie H. Helper (brother of the famous author of The Impending Crisis) to leave New Bern when he presumed to advise the governor on the conduct of his official duties.[10]

Although the commanding officer in the area, General Ambrose Burnside, quickly defended Stanly, traveling to Washington where he met with Lincoln and others, the governor's tenuous position had been further weakened. Overlooked in the issue were the facts that Colyer had misrepresented Stanly's instructions to him and that the one slave who had been returned to a master had later been forcibly freed again by irate soldiers. More ominously, the Senate moved from an investigation of Stanly's individual conduct of his office to the larger issues implicit in his appointment. What should be the correct form of government in the occupied areas and from where should its

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[9]By the late spring and early summer of 1862, Sumner and Lincoln had already experienced several unsettling encounters over the conduct of the war. In view of the senator's concerns about the costly victory of Shiloh, the unhurried investment of Corinth, and the inexplicable behavior of McClellan, the North Carolina imbroglio only added to his suspicions about the rail splitter's judgement. When a tired and impatient Lincoln protested that he should not be taken for "a School-Committee-man," and refused to overrule Stanly, the Massachusetts radical took his complaint to the Senate. He introduced a resolution asserting that the post of military governor was one "unknown to the Constitution and laws of the Union," in defiance of "the powers of Congress." Shutting Up of Colored Schools by the Provisional Government of North Carolina, June 2, 1862, George Frisbie Hoar, ed., Charles Sumner: His Complete Works (20 vols., New York, 1969 [1900]), IX, 112-15; David Donald, Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man (New York, 1970), 59.

[10]New York Tribune, June 4, 1862.

authority be derived? During the latter days of June, the very legality of the various provisional governments, including Andrew Johnson's administration, came under scrutiny.

The debate centered on the president's authority to appoint military governors. Connecticut Senator James Dixon, a Republican, supported the legitimacy of Lincoln's military governments, arguing that the president's action was consistent with his larger role as commander-in-chief. "I expressly said he could not appoint a Governor of the State of North Carolina," Dixon conceded, "but that he might appoint a Governor of that conquered district or territory, or rather the people, the public enemies who were making war against the Government of the United States." Illinois Republican Lyman Trumbull retorted that "President Lincoln may detail Andrew Johnson, a brigadier in the Army of the United States, to keep the peace of Nashville" but denied that "the president has the right to make an officer without the advice and consent of the Senate, or without authority of law." In rebuttal Dixon chided his fellow senator for criticizing the president and interjecting the name of a prominent loyalist into an unharmonious debate:

> I confess I do dislike to see men who pretend to be friends of an administration attack in violent, angry language the course of that administration. Why, sir, this is about the most important thing President Lincoln has done. It is a very important step which he has taken. He has taken one of our number, a distinguished patriot--I may call him by name, for his name is historical--Andrew Johnson of Tennessee; he has taken him from our number and made him military Governor of Tennessee. Sir, if he has done anything since he has been President of the United States for which he has the thanks of the American people, it is that act. I justify it. I will not mouse around in the records of the

> Constitution, or among dry and dusty law books to see whether that was a justifiable act by constitutional law.[11]

Thus the constitutional issues that would consume Lincoln's time and later that of his successor were already being raised over his early efforts to begin restoration.

Like Andrew Johnson, Stanly seemed to have overestimated the desire of North Carolinians to return to the Union and underestimated the staying power of the rebels. He blamed ambitious politicians for the war and denied that the Tarheels had any reason for embracing secession. Echoing his Tennessee contemporary's early insistence on the safety of slavery within the Union and the danger posed by secession, Stanly warned that within a year, "there won't be room in North Carolina for a slave's foot."[12] Nevertheless, his efforts to convince the North Carolinians to return to their ancient fraternity bore little fruit.[13] Moreover, the Tarheel Unionists shared the same anxieties as their brethren in Tennessee. They feared to commit themselves openly lest the Federal troops suddenly be withdrawn and the country be overrun by vengeful guerrillas and Confederate troops. Indeed, during McClellan's ill-fated Peninsula campaign, Lincoln

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[11] Cong. Globe, 37 Cong., 2 sess., 2973-74.

[12] Boston Journal, June 26, 1862, quoted in Brown, Edward Stanly, 219.

[13] In the fall of 1862, the Confederate governor Zebulon B. Vance rebuffed Stanly's request for a peace conference, declaring that he had no authority to enter into such negotiations. Similar efforts to achieve reconciliation through correspondence with Confederate generals Daniel H. Hill and Samuel G. French were also fruitless. Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, 91-92.

ordered Burnside and his seven thousand troops to reinforce the Young Napoleon's ponderous army, leaving Stanly and his fellow loyalists protected by only three infantry regiments, three artillery regiments, and one cavalry regiment. The other forty-seven were in Virginia.[14] In one instance, the worst fears of the Carolinians were realized. During a Confederate assault on New Bern in February, 1864, forty men were captured by the rebels, twenty-two of that number subsequently executed as Confederate deserters. These bloody reprisals utterly demoralized the loyalists.[15]

Stanly and other pro-administration figures were disheartened also by the foraging expeditions of the U. S. Army troops, which all too often resulted in episodes of wanton destruction, looting, and pilferage.[16] Since the military governor exercised so little authority within the narrow limits of the Federal lines, he could do little more than protest. It will be recalled that Johnson frequently urged that foragers should be careful to give certificates of value for animals or goods taken, even when prominent secessionists were involved.[17] Yet the Tennessee military governor was more skillful in his public pronouncements and conversations, managing to convey the

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[14]John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill, 1963), 128-29.

[15]Delaney, "Charles Henry Foster," 364-65.

[16]Stanley to John G. Foster, January 20, 1863, OR, Ser. 1, XVIII, 525-26.

[17]See, for example, Johnson to James S. Negley, August 3, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 593.

impression that he favored a more Draconian policy than the "milk and rose water" generals like Buell. Conversely, the Tarheel governor seemed soft on rebels by his protests.

Under pressure from the White House to ascertain "the will of the people," in the fall of 1862, Stanly ordered an election held in the district under Federal control. The handful of "voters" chose Stanly's own private secretary, one Jennings Pigot, a North Carolina native who only recently had returned to the state after many years in Washington, D. C. The whole effort proved to be an embarrassment when the House refused to seat him.[18] Rather than adding credibility to the process of military government, such efforts served only to tarnish further the sceptre that the president tried to wield in his efforts to maintain reconstruction as an executive responsibility.

The North Carolina governor quickly came to grief when Lincoln issued the final Emanicipation Proclamation. Unlike Johnson, who could at least claim credit for having Tennessee excluded from its provisions, Stanly enjoyed no such position of influence with the president. He further put distance between himself and the administration by openly criticizing the decision, thereby destroying any further hopes that he might have that the proclamation might not apply to North Carolina. He felt that it had rendered impossible an effort toward compromise and reconciliation. Moreover, he shared the fears and prejudices of both Andrew Johnson and his fellow Tarheels when it came to accepting the Negro; he complained about the enlistment and

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[18]Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, 93.

use of former slaves as soldiers. "Are no instructions to be given that they are not to be sent out into the field or allowed to go on foraging excursions, committing pillage and robbery at discretion?" he asked. Warning that "the most deplorable calamities" would befall both the loyal citizens and the newly freed bondsmen unless proper precautions were taken, he gloomily forecast "a servile war" should the present trends continue.[19]

Andrew Johnson had resisted emancipation for almost a year before he endorsed Lincoln's policy. Stanly, whose conservatism in racial matters was more akin to that of ex-governor William B. Campbell than Johnson, could not countenance emancipation or the use of Negro troops. Believing that his future usefulness had been compromised by the Emancipation Proclamation, the North Carolina military governor resigned on January 15, 1863, insisting that the president's policies had gone far beyond the original war aims of his administration. Unable to assure the Carolinians that the Lincoln government in reality only sought to restore the Union and to secure their constitutional rights, he predicted that emancipation would bring the most mischievous consequences. It would eliminate all possibility of a peaceful end to the conflict; it would dishearten the embattled loyalists; it would strengthen the position of the rebels; and it would expose the Africans to the most woeful circumstances. Stanly defended his stormy role as military governor: "That I have offended some is probable; but they were those whose schemes of plunder I

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[19]Stanly to John G. Foster, January 20, 1863, OR, Ser. I, XVIII, 525.

defeated--whose oppressions of the innocent and helpless I resisted."[20] Thus was concluded the unhappy tenure of Edward Stanly as North Carolina's military governor.

Lincoln's experiment in North Carolina must be judged as a total failure. Not only was the provisional government a constant source of embarrassment, owing to Stanly's own philosophical departures from White House policy, but the governor resigned without leaving the bare semblance of a restoration process behind him.[21] At least Johnson had established a mechanism, however questionable and illegitimate, for the resurrection of a state government. Rather than an impediment and an embarrassment, Andrew Johnson proved to be a media hero whose national prestige surely augmented that of the president. Recognizing the Tennessean's worth as an ornament to his administration, Lincoln gave the southern Democrat second place on the Union ticket in 1864 while Edward Stanly and other conservative Whigs like William B. Campbell were supporting McClellan. Although the president had many opportunities to regret his choice of Stanly as provisional governor in North Carolina, he gave no such indication in the case of Andrew Johnson of Tennessee. Whereas the Tarheel would make almost no impression on the later history of his state and nation as a consequence

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[20] Quoted in Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 173-75.

[21] No active successor was ever appointed. Local radicals urged the selection of a homegrown abolitionist named Daniel R. Goodloe, but the president apparently considered further efforts useless. In North Carolina, reconstruction would have to await the climax at Appomattox and the elevation of a native son to the presidency. Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, 95.

of his time of trials as military governor, the same cannot be said of the Greeneville tailor. Yet, as unhappy an experiment as North Carolina's provisional government proved to be, its reputation would be easily eclipsed by early efforts to restore Union authority in Louisiana.

In May, 1864, Wendell Phillips, the famous Massachusetts abolitionist and administration gadfly, sneered at the reorganization effort in Louisiana, calling it "Mr. Lincoln's model of reconstruction." Indeed that state, liberated by Commander Farragut's impetuous assault on its naval defenses, would be the first to hold elections under Lincoln's idealistic "ten-percent plan," permitting the organization of a government whenever 10 percent of the electorate of 1860 took a loyalty oath.[22] Louisiana thereby represented a kind of bellwether for testing the viability of the president's reconstruction process in general and the effectiveness of military governments in particular.

Despite Lincoln's desires to use the state as a test case for his reconstruction theories, it was one where the army clearly overshadowed the provisional government and where the commander of the army in the area exercised greater authority than did the actual military governor.[23] In clear contrast to the care that Lincoln

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[22]Wendell Phillips to Edward Gilbert, May 27, 1864, Peyton McCrary, Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: The Louisiana Experiment (Princeton, 1978), 4.

[23]Although Butler retained his army command (major general in command of the Department of the Gulf) and did not share Andrew Johnson's status as a civilian appointed to a quasi-military position, he was, nevertheless, responsible for the administration of New Orleans and the adjacent area--and hence a de facto military

took to appoint immediately a Tennessee Unionist as governor upon the occupation of Nashville, his belated selection of General George F. Shepley, a northern crony and subordinate of Benjamin F. Butler, as the military governor of Louisiana, must be regarded as an expedient and a nullity. By the time the president appointed Shepley in August, 1862, the army commander Butler was already exercising the functions of a provisional governor, powers that Butler and his successor would not ever really surrender until 1864. Thus the story of the provisional government in Louisiana, unlike Tennessee, is the story of the role of the commander of the Department of the Gulf.

In his anxiety to rescue his state from the rebels and to restore the machinery of government to the hands of its loyal citizens, Andrew Johnson relied on a moderate strategy of reconstruction cloaked in the language of radicalism. He orchestrated a series of well-publicized arrests, banishments, and proclamations aimed at the rebel elite, earning him the undying enmity of the southern sympathizers and the often misplaced admiration of the radical northern press and like-minded political observers. Had his admirers recognized his lesser known tendencies to grant favors, exceptions, exemptions, paroles, and pardons, especially to imploring ladies, perhaps they would have

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governor. In fact his assumption of powers was so broad that the Lincoln administration attempted to dilute his authority by appointing General George F. Shepley military governor of Louisiana. However, Shepley never really exercised complete control since Butler and later his replacement, General Nathaniel P. Banks, dominated the provisional government. Not until a civilian governor, Michael Hahn, was elected in 1864 would the government pass out of the hands of the army.

been less surprised when the presidential Johnson manifested the well-concealed traits of the military governor. Indeed, the true character of the Johnson government emerges most clearly when compared to one of Louisiana's early provisional administrations with an even more notorious reputation for radical solutions and rigorous coercion.

When Major General Benjamin F. Butler arrived in New Orleans on May 1, 1862, he encountered a sullen, battered city, where thousands of people were hungry and desperate, if not actually starving. Re-enacting similar scenes of lawlessness that had prevailed in Nashville immediately prior to its occupation, the public and official response to the impending capture of the crescent city had degenerated into an orgy of wanton destruction and sanctioned incendiarism. Cotton, steamboats, and warehouses were put to the torch in a senseless display of fear and desperation--reminiscent of the looted commissaries, burned river boats, and wrecked bridges of Nashville.[24]

Although there were many surface similarities (especially in their flair for attracting headlines--and even international opprobrium) in their treatment of stubborn rebel civilians, one may find great and profound differences between Johnson and "Beast" Butler (as the southern press labeled him), most notably in their manner of dealing with the rebel population.[25]

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[24]Joe Gray Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed: 1863-1877 (Baton Rouge, 1974), 2-3.

[25]Butler's brief service as military governor provoked such hostility and resentment that southern propagandists almost exhausted

That Lincoln should place the military government of New Orleans in the hands of "an old Breckinridge Democrat" like Ben Butler confounded most southerners but followed from the same sort of reasoning that had dispatched Andrew Johnson to Tennessee. The president obviously hoped that the former Massachusetts lawyer's prewar politics might be useful in "drawing back into the ark the wanderers and the deluded."[26] However, the flamboyant New England politico would demonstrate so great a genius for generating hostility and opposition to his administration that he would be recalled in December, 1862. Even more incompetent in the area of public relations than he had been on the field, Butler would leave behind so tarnished a reputation as military governor that the hostile British press termed his tenure "a rule of intolerable brutality," which forced even staid Englishmen to blush that such actions had been "committed by a man belonging to the Anglo-Saxon race."[27] "Beast" Butler proved to be even a greater embarrassment than Edward Stanly.

The citizens of New Orleans demonstrated from the very beginning their complete hostility to the Federal occupation. While awaiting the arrival of Butler's troops, Commander Farragut had to threaten to

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their catalogue of ephithets. Indeed the southern distaste for the cross-eyed and tough-talking political general was so great that, reportedly, steamships traveling the lower Mississippi for years after the war were provided with chamber pots bearing the unmistakable likeness of the "Beast." Richard S. West, Jr., Lincoln's Scapegoat General: A Life of Benjamin F. Butler, 1818-1893 (Boston, 1965), 143.

[26] Ibid., 171.

[27] McCarthy, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction, 38-39, Hans L. Trefousse, Ben Butler: The South Called Him BEAST! (New York, 1957), 112.

shell the city to force the die-hard mayor and city officials into submission. It was only through the intervention of former U. S. Senator and envoy to Spain, Pierre Soulé, and a Confederate military escort that the naval officers sent to demand capitulation were allowed to return safely to the fleet. In fact, when Butler learned that the U. S. flag had been torn down by an unruly mob at the newly liberated Federal mint, he vowed to punish those responsible. "They shall fear the stripes if they don't reverence the stars," he promised.[28]

Confronted with a population so hostile to the Federal government that mobs had already killed men who dared to show their pleasure at seeing the arrival of U. S. troops and the old flag, Butler went to work immediately. He declared martial law the same day that he arrived, circumscribing the freedom of the press and placing the telegraph under control of the army. On May 6, he established a military commission to try capital and other serious offenses. A week later, he issued an order forbidding fasting and prayer under proclamations issued by Jefferson Davis. In his pronouncements, Butler emphasized the peaceful intentions behind the martial law and encouraged the citizens to continue their normal pursuits. However, secessionists were required to surrender their arms and suppress all flags except those of the United States. Unionists and those taking the oath of allegiance would receive protection (which often

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[28]West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 129-32; Trefousse, Ben Butler, 105-6.

was desperately needed). Several loyalists had to be rescued and placed under military protection in the early weeks. Indeed, Butler's own headquarters had four howitzers on the corners, dramatically placed to awe the mobs which constantly harassed the Federal occupation forces in the first few days following the surrender. On one occasion the rotund commander had to compel a stubborn hackman at the point of a bayonet to drive him and Mrs. Butler to the hotel where they had taken residence.[29]

Although Butler clearly intended to demonstrate the mailed fist, he also sought to reassure the citizens that their peaceful response to the Federal authority would result in moderate policies. In this respect he followed the same course as Johnson outlined in his initial statement to the rebel populace of Nashville.[30] Like the Tennessee executive, he permitted the municipal government to operate independently for a time before he chose to interfere. The rebel response to their Yankee conquerors also echoed the hostility and disrespect often accorded the Army of the Ohio and other units in the Tennessee

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[29]Robert N. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, comps., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (4 vols., New York, 1956 [1887]), III, 582n; West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 129-34. One author has observed that the proclamation by which the general established martial law in reality was a moderate document, deliberately based on a similar edict adopted by the Confederate military authorities prior to the occupation. On March 15, 1862, General Mansfield Lovell, C.S.A., declared martial law, required all male adult citizens to swear an oath of allegiance on penalty of exile, and established a system of registration, McCrary, Lincoln and Reconstruction, 76.

[30]See, for example, Speech to Davidson County Citizens, March 22, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Johnson Papers, V, 233, and passim.

theatre.[31] However, it will be remembered that while Johnson was content to lecture individuals for their lack of patriotism and subject them to the oath or exile in certain specified instances, he took no such retribution as did "Beast" Butler.

Nothing emanating from the Nashville occupation, however, had the effect of Butler's General Order No. 28, issued on May 15, 1862. Although the Federal soldiers in Tennessee endured the same sneers of contempt, the flaunted "Bonnie Blue" flags, and the ostentatious hostility that shocked and insulted the soldiers of New Orleans, the Tennessee governor's lectures never touched the quick of southern sensibilities like Butler's notorious "Woman Order." The Federal commander simply decreed that "when any female shall, by word, gesture, or movement, insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation."[32] On one level the order was a master stroke. It achieved the desired effect almost immediately. Observing that his officers had been subjected earlier to various indignities, the military governor bragged that within a week following his order "they were not insulted in New Orleans by

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[31] Unionists and soldiers were often hissed and otherwise insulted by the rebels of Nashville, especially the females who often went to great lengths to signify their displeasure with the Federal occupation. One stubborn young Confederate out of a group of ladies who refused to walk under the U. S. flag, calling it a "filthy Lincoln rag," got tangled in her hoops and tumbled in the street, delighting at least one offended loyalist with a "brilliant exhibition of garters and other unmentionable things." Nashville Union, May 6, 14, 1862.

[32] Quoted in West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 139-40.

he or she."[33] Although the "Woman Order" served its intended purpose by crudely threatening to lower the refined and respectable females of the Crescent City to the level of their presumably less virtuous soiled sorority of fallen doves, the regional, national, and international repercussions brought the Lincoln administration great distress and embarrassment. Butler might have been comforted by the immediate consequences of his order but the shock effect on the integrity of the mission and purpose of the provisional government was devastating. In the long run the "Woman Order" would help discredit him in most quarters outside the North. Although his iron rule surely pleased those who believed that the stubborn rebels should be treated harshly, his actions sorely tried the administrative patience of Lincoln and most certainly gave the Confederacy a propaganda advantage of untold dimensions.[34]

In the early hours of the Federal occupation, a gambler named William Mumford had torn down the first American flag hoisted over the city. Along with six Confederate soldiers charged with violating their parole, Mumford was tried before a military commission and sentenced to death. Although the military governor later commuted the parole-breakers' sentences, he remained firmly convinced that he should make an example of the gambler. Despite piteous pleas for leniency from Mumford's family and the intervention of Unionists,

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[33] Quoted in Howard Palmer Johnson, "New Orleans Under General Butler," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIV (1941), 496.

[34] A Mississippi newspaper reportedly offered $10,000 for Butler's head. McCrary, Lincoln and Reconstruction, 80; Trefousse, Ben Butler, 111.

Butler ordered that the execution be carried out on June 7, hanging the condemned man on the very spot where he had ripped down the U. S. flag.[35] Like the "Woman Order," the execution of Mumford played into the hands of southern apologists and progagandists. Confederate President Davis issued a proclamation, declaring Butler a felon and an outlaw who, if apprehended, should be summarily hanged on the nearest tree.[36] However, Butler continued his rigorous path.

In dealing with arch-secessionists, the commander of the Department of the Gulf adhered to the policy of arresting prominent rebels and sending them to prison in a manner reminiscent of the coercive efforts of Andrew Johnson. Conspicious traitors like Pierre Soulé were spirited away to northern prisons. However, minor rebel offenders like the bookseller exhibiting a Federal skeleton, the citizen making a cross from the bones of another dead Union soldier, and the female wearing a miniature Bonnie Blue flag and handing out propaganda leaflets, all suffered durance vile within the military department.[37] Of course, Butler's arbitrary arrests added to the festering resentment already poisoning the New Orleans atmosphere. When he arrested Mrs. Phillip Phillips, the venomously pro-southern wife of the ex-Alabama congressman, his action made her a cause célèbre. Having already spent some time in a Washington prison for her political pronouncements, Mrs. Phillips came under the general's

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[35]West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 147-52.

[36]Ibid., 205-6.

[37]Trefousse, Ben Butler, 117.

scrutiny in New Orleans when her child spat on some Union officers. Although she and her husband escaped with an apology for that incident, her untimely laughter during a Federal funeral procession provoked the outraged Butler to send her off to a Mississippi prison. As a consequence, the general was widely denounced in the South and in Europe for his action.[38] Compare "Beast" Butler's treatment of Mrs. Phillips with Governor Johnson's generally circumspect and essentially more accommodating approach to southern womanhood. Both governors understood the publicity value of their position, but Andrew Johnson seemed more successful at avoiding Butler's errors. Like Br'er Rabbit's scrap with the Tar Baby, the general's every move took him closer to disaster.

Although Andrew Johnson had created an international incident of sorts by trying to force a British citizen to swear an oath of allegiance, the Louisiana military commander angered virtually the entire diplomatic community in New Orleans by his high-handed actions. Despite protests from all the foreign consuls in the port city, Butler ignored claims of diplomatic immunity and seized Confederate property wherever he could, even if it meant forcible entry into the consulate of an ostensibly friendly nation. Contemptuous of foreigners and consular officials who, he believed, harbored pro-southern views, the over-zealous patriot managed to offend the British, the Dutch, the French, and the Spanish, among others.[39]

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[38]West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 154-55.

[39]See Peter H. Watson to William H. Seward, October 17, 1862, Johnson Papers. Clifford L. Egan, "Friction in New Orleans: General

His disputes with the foreign powers started immediately upon his arrival. A few examples will suffice. A "European Brigade" hastily formed by the various consuls kept order during the interval between Confederate and Federal rule. When the occupation forces took over the responsibility of maintaining order, thirty-seven members of the British guard voted to send their arms and uniforms to the rebel Beauregard. When he learned of this violation of neutrality, Butler confined two of their leaders and ordered all to surrender their weapons and leave the city, believing that Beauregard should receive the men as well as their proffered accoutrements of war. Secretary Seward eventually released the two British citizens but supported the justice of Butler's action.[40]

Even more serious than his row with the British was his forcible seizure of $800,000 worth of Mexican silver from the Dutch. The specie was deposited in a Louisiana bank which caused the dauntless Butler to believe that the transaction had been designed to prevent the silver from falling into Federal hands. Consequently, he sent a military detail to search the consular premises. The soldiers also took a key from the Dutch consul's person and opened his vault where they discovered the silver. When the Dutch minister heard of the incident, he demanded satisfaction from the secretary of state, having

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Butler versus the Spanish Consul," Louisiana History, IX (1968), 43-45, and passim. The state department was kept busy fielding complaints from the Greeks, Belgians, Swiss, Rumanians, and Prussians, in addition to the other major European powers.

[40]Trefousse, Ben Butler, 125; West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 192.

been joined in his protest by his British and French counterparts who also wanted to discuss their grievances. Butler had refused to allow the French consul to transfer a similar cache of specie (which also belonged to another Louisiana bank) out of the country, suspecting that it might be used to purchase arms.[41]

Having angered the British, the Dutch, and the French, the tactless governor proceeded to antagonize the Spanish. Already irritated by captured documents showing that the Spanish consul was receiving a commission from the sales of muskets to the Confederacy, Butler retaliated by quarantining all shipping, theoretically because of an outbreak of yellow fever, and required all vessels to be inspected before allowing them to unload at New Orleans. All to no avail the Spanish complained that other vessels seemed to receive speedier inspections and less vigorous treatment from American officials. Relations between the two nations were further strained by Spain's habit of allowing prominent rebels passage on their ships, causing Butler to complain that the Spanish were violating the rules of neutrality. In the view of Spain, giving political asylum to dissidents was humane and proper. In all the general's quarrels with the Spanish, Seward supported Butler and condoned his actions. At one point, the secretary of state even accepted Butler's explanation that $9,600 that he demanded from a Spanish firm (charged with selling smuggled goods from blockade runners) did not represent extortion

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[41]Trefousse, Ben Butler, 125-26.

but a justifiable penalty for their crimes.[42] Nevertheless, the accumulated grievances being amassed by the diplomatic community surely weakened the general's position in the Lincoln scheme of reconstruction.

Having no wish to give the European powers further provocation or additional incentives to intervene in the American conflict, Seward appointed a special commissioner to investigate the various consular complaints.[43] At the same time the secretary of state persuaded Lincoln to create the new office of "Military Governor of Louisiana" for General George F. Shepley, the post commander of New Orleans, hoping to remove the consular matters from Butler's sphere of responsibility. Although Seward's commissioner tried Butler's forebearance with "rose water" decisions, restoring most of the property that had been seized from the various consuls, the general easily circumvented the secretary's attempt to outmaneuver him. Butler simply packed Shepley off to Washington to present another crucial issue to the Lincoln administration and never relinquished responsibility in matters dealing with the consuls.[44]

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[42] Egan, "Friction in New Orleans," 45-52.

[43] The commissioner was Reverdy Johnson, the prominent Maryland Unionist, bearing an animus toward Butler, dating back to the general's hostile passage through Baltimore in 1861. In the thirteen cases submitted to him, Johnson overruled Butler in eleven, forcing him to restore the silver taken from the Dutch consul, specie seized from the French, and sugar confiscated from the Greek representative, among others. West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 56-58, 194-96.

[44] Ibid., 199-200.

The concerns that Butler sent his emissary to convey centered around the Negro question. The Massachusetts politico had first used black fugitive slaves as laborers in his earlier operations, less than 150 miles down the James River from Richmond at Fortress Monroe. The general's widely publicized resort to the term "contraband" as a justification for impressing fugitive slaves (previously used by their owners against the United States) and as a general application for runaways fired the popular imagination in the North, and introduced a new catchword to the vocabulary. However, at Fortress Monroe the "contraband" question was more clear cut than in Louisiana. In the former instance, the fugitives had either been abandoned by their masters or had been used to build fortifications by the rebel authorities. However, many of the Louisiana planters within Butler's scope of authority had not given any offense and by his own admission were trying to resume their daily routines in a peaceful manner. Nevertheless, one of Butler's subordinates, a Vermont abolitionist named John W. Phelps, created great distress for his commander by retaining all fugitives who reached his camp. Despite his tough approach in dealing with insults to the flag and to his military personnel, the general preferred to appease the local slaveholders by allowing them to reclaim their runaways.[45]

The Lincoln administration, however, was no help. When Seward's own commissioner, Reverdy Johnson, complained that all "the Union

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[45]Trefousse, Ben Butler, 79, 130-31; McCrary, Lincoln and Reconstruction, 82-84.

feeling in Louisiana was being crushed out by the course of General Phelps," the president demurred. Denying that he harbored any desires "to touch the foundations of their society," he insisted that the Louisiana citizens had brought their troubles on themselves. Said the president: "they forced a necessity upon me to send armies among them, and it is their own fault, not mine, that they are annoyed by the presence of General Phelps." Insisting that the remedy to "all this is simply to take their place in the Union upon the old terms," the chief executive vowed that "I shall not surrender this game leaving any available card unplayed."[46]

While Lincoln was considering the trump card of emancipation, Butler was feeling the need for more reinforcements, and his earlier opposition to arming the contrabands began to recede.[47] At the same time, a growing restlessness among the bondsmen signaled by a slave stampede and a violent outbreak on the outskirts of New Orleans convinced the general that the blacks' energies should be channeled into military service. Consequently, he issued a general order on August 22, 1862, inviting all free Negroes previously enrolled in an unique all-black militia unit (originally authorized by the Confederate government) to enlist in the Federal army. By accepting a regiment first created by the rebel authorities, he could argue that the

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[46]Basler, Works of Lincoln, V, 342-43, 343n.

[47]The Confiscation Act of 1862, providing for the emancipation of all slaves except those of loyal masters, also influenced the general to experiment with plantations cultivated with paid black labor. Trefousse, Ben Butler, 131.

precedent for arming the blacks was already set.[48] Nevertheless, Butler's extraordinary action anticipated even the terms of the Emancipation Proclamation relative to arming the Africans and certainly antedated Andrew Johnson's acceptance of black soldiers by over a year. The radicals surely were delighted.

Although Butler proved adept at pleasing the radicals, he would be vulnerable to other critics less enthralled by his administration. Rumors of graft, corruption, and peculation in the Department of the Gulf began to circulate in Louisiana and eventually reached Washington. Opportunities for speculation abounded in an area under stringent trade regulations and embargoes. Butler had the authority to issue permits for trade in the department and enjoyed vast powers under the confiscation acts, which gave him ample opportunity to use his prerogatives corruptly. Although the general's guilty involvement in the various speculations charged to him has not yet been fully documented, he surely engaged in reckless behavior without appropriate regard for the consequences.[49]

In one instance, he purchased a captured cargo of cotton and turpentine worth about $5,000 and sent it north on government vessels. Butler always maintained that this action was legitimate and even saved the government the expense of ballast. However, he heedlessly pursued his course, oblivious to the damage being done. The problem took on greater magnitude when his own brother got involved in a

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[48] McCrary, Lincoln and Reconstruction, 86-92.

[49] Trefousse, Ben Butler, 122-23.

variety of profitable and, most likely, illegal activities. The individual in question, Andrew Jackson Butler, reportedly coerced and cajoled planters into selling him their farm produce which he resold at a great profit to the authorities in New Orleans for poor relief. He was also accused of smuggling and other illicit activities. Butler apparently winked at such activities until pressure from Treasury Secretary Chase forced him to close down his brother's operations.[50] Nevertheless, the damage had already been done.

The hue and cry for his recall fed on all sorts of innuendo and scandal mongering. Even the disposal of silverware, military accoutrements, and other items in his place of residence became a matter of controversy. Soon after he moved into the former home of Confederate General David E. Twiggs, tales of misconduct began to circulate. Whispers that Butler had looted Twiggs' silverware (or at least his spoons) dogged his every step. Not only had he stolen the spoons, but had appropriated the rebel officer's ceremonial swords, the Creoles charged. They refused to believe the harassed general's claim that he sent the swords to Washington for public disposal or that he purchased the silverware legitimately for his mother. So enticing were the stories of malfeasance that ever after his enemies called him "Spoons Butler."[51]

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[50]West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 186-88; Trefousse, Ben Butler, 122-24. Chase reported that Andrew Butler had apparently earned between one and two million dollars in illicit profiteering. West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 190-91.

[51]Trefousse, Ben Butler, 124.

Understandably, rumors began to circulate in Washington and elsewhere in the fall of 1862. The general sought assurances from the president that he would not be humiliated or replaced without a hearing but received none. He was still astonished when General Nathaniel P. Banks, like himself a Massachusetts political general, arrived in the Crescent City on December 14, with presidential orders replacing him as commander of the Department of the Gulf.[52]

Whether Butler's administration of New Orleans was as bad as tradition has portrayed it is subject to question.[53] It is clear, however, that his tenure of less than eight months suffers by comparison with Andrew Johnson's sojourn of three years of essentially mild and scandal-free military government. Not only did the Tennessean not hang anyone, defame the Nashville female population, engage in questionable business operations, or embarrass the Lincoln administration in other ways, but he interceded many times on behalf of many individuals, great and small, warred with the army's unsavory police system, and tried generally to bring order and rationality to an essentially impossible assignment.[54] That he often failed was not due to a want of judgment, insight, or character. The same cannot be said of Ben Butler.

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[52]West, Lincoln's Scapegoat General, 200-02.

[53]See, for example, Trefousse, Ben Butler, 134; and Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 18.

[54]During Johnson's impeachment trial, the radicals tried unsuccessfully to find a corrupt connection between him and the Nashville and Northwestern Railroad. Winston, Andrew Johnson, 410.

The Louisiana experiment passed into the hands of others. Before Butler had been removed, Lincoln had written him, Johnson of Tennessee, and George F. Shepley (ostensibly the Louisiana "military governor"), urging elections in Louisiana and Tennessee. The president wanted to effect the election of regular state officials, legislators, members of congress, and senators. "Follow forms of law as far as convenient," he had advised, "but at all events get the expression of the largest number of the people possible." He naturally expected that "the men elected should be gentlemen of character, willing to swear support to the constitution, as of old, and known to be above reasonable suspicion of duplicity."[55] Like his plan of amnesty and reconciliation, this directive reflected the curious amalgamation of idealism, naivete, and expediency that characterized Lincoln's blueprint for the postwar South. With a desperate earnestness that bordered on blindness or guilelessness, the rail splitter professed to believe that men who had already risked their lives, careers, social standing, and fortunes could be suddenly persuaded to reverse their attitudes of hostility to his administration and embrace minority and quasi-legitimate governments dominated by strangers and their ancient enemies. Always distracted by the imperatives of preserving the Union, he apparently did not foresee that the former rebels would want to restore their original political environment even in the face of a Union victory.

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[55]Basler, Works of Lincoln, V, 462-63.

Unlike Andrew Johnson who dominated the loyalist movement in his state, General Butler had not actively fostered a Union movement or involved himself in a free state political organization in Louisiana. Nevertheless, the White House depended on the military government and the army to embolden and protect the local Unionists.

Under pressure from Lincoln and local loyalists, George F. Shepley, the regular military governor, authorized elections on December 3, 1862, in two congressional districts, achieving the selection of two U. S. representatives. Although the legality of the election was vigorously debated in Louisiana, Washington, and elsewhere, the representatives, Benjamin F. Flanders, a radical, and Michael Hahn, a moderate, were seated in the remaining days of the 37th Congress in the winter of 1863.[56]

General Banks' initial efforts to conciliate were superficially more successful than had been the rigors of "Beast" Butler. He hinted that the Creoles might be compensated for their losses to Federal foragers and depredations. More importantly, he declared that the state was no longer in rebellion since it was now represented in Congress. Reflecting a general relaxation of occupation imperatives, Banks reopened most of the churches originally closed by the hated Butler. Nevertheless, the same attitudes that produced secession remained intact even when the general's regulations concerning black labor and his refusal to commission black officers reflected the

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[56]Amos E. Simpson and Vaughan Baker, "Michael Hahn: Steady Patriot," Louisiana History, XIII (1972), 233; Lincoln to George F. Shepley, November 21, 1862, Basler, Works of Lincoln, V, 504-5, 505n.

prejudices of most of Louisiana's white citizens. Soon children and ladies resumed their insulting behavior to the Union and Federal soldiers. Eventually, Banks resorted to banishment, arbitrary arrests, and confiscation proceedings.[57]

At the same time that he was trying to deal with the rebels, Banks was also attempting to marshal the Union minority into a viable political force. By 1863 the Union faction represented three distinct elements, which seriously impeded reorganization. One group reflected the same conservative constituency in Louisiana that had propelled William B. Campbell, John Lellyett, and similar Tennessee politicians into opposition to Andrew Johnson. Like their Tennessee counterparts, the Creole conservatives desired the restoration of the Union with all "constitutional rights" in place, including slavery. The dominant Union group was the so-called Free State party, led by Michael Hahn who had returned to New Orleans in April, 1863, following his brief stint in the Congress. Hahn and his fellow Free Staters agreed with Lincoln's moderate approach to reconstruction and enjoyed the support of General Banks. The Free State group accepted abolition but otherwise counseled caution and moderation. The third faction was represented by the radicals, favoring emancipation, black suffrage, punitive treatment of the rebels, and other extreme measures.[58]

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[57]Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 18-21; McCrary, Lincoln and Reconstruction, 346-47.

[58]Simpson and Baker, "Michael Hahn," 233-36.

A critical turning point in the military government of Louisiana occurred in December, 1863, when General Banks decided to seize control of the reorganization of Louisiana's civil government. Always supportive of moderate or conservative racial solutions, Banks had allowed his provost marshals and officers to help enforce discipline among the black population, especially in labor problems. The general and his allies argued that gradual social and economic changes would be acceptable to the white majority. Louisiana radicals, however, denounced gradualism and insisted that black suffrage would be needed to provide support for a postwar Republican organization. They had planned to elect delegates to a constitutional convention and revise the 1852 constitution to emancipate the slaves and enfranchise the freedmen.[59] The so-called Free State party nominated Michael Hahn, the hand-picked choice of General Banks. Hahn called for the end of slavery but opposed the extension of political rights to the former bondsmen. In the election he easily defeated two other candidates, representing the radical and conservative elements of the limited electorate.[60]

In his last public address, the president pointed to the progress achieved by Hahn and his administration who had taken over the responsibilities of the military government. Noting that "the elective franchise" had not been given to the freedmen, he made no secret of his sentiments. "I would myself prefer that it were now conferred

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[59]McCrary, Lincoln and Reconstruction, 195-210, 347-48.

[60]Simpson and Baker, "Michael Hahn," 241-43.

on the very intelligent, and those who serve our cause as soldiers." Still, he found no reason to deny the right of the state to resume its proper relationship in the Union.

> Some twelve thousand voters in the heretofore slave-state of Louisiana have sworn allegiance to the Union, assumed to be the rightful political power of the State, held elections, organized a State government, adopted a free-state constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white, and empowered the legislature to confer the elective franchise upon the colored man. Their legislature has already voted to ratify the constitutional amendment recently passed by Congress, abolishing slavery throughout the nation. . . . Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only what it should be as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it?[61]

All in all, the president, at long last, had considerable reason to view with some satisfaction the course of restoration in Louisiana. A loyal government had been elected, slavery had been ended, and elected representatives had been sent to Washington. As in the case of Tennessee, however, an ominous portent would be established when the electoral votes were not counted and the newly selected congressmen and senators were denied their seats in January and February, 1865.[62] Charles Sumner set the tone, snarling impatiently that the procedures which resulted in the newly formed government of Louisiana constituted nothing more than a gigantic hoax:

> The pretended State government in Louisiana is utterly indefensible whether you look at its origin or its character. To describe it, I must use plain language. It is a mere seven-months' abortion, begotten by the

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[61] Last Public Address, April 11, 1865, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VIII, 403-4.

[62] McCarthy, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction, 76.

> bayonet in criminal conjunction with the spirit of caste, and born before its time, rickety, unformed, unfinished--whose continued existence will be a burden, a reproach, and a wrong.[63]

Long before Andrew Johnson arrived in Washington to do battle with the radicals, the gauntlet had been flung down.

When General Samuel Curtis' Army of the Southwest routed a larger, but poorly equipped, rebel force at the battle of Pea Ridge on March 7 and 8, 1862, northern Arkansas was opened to Federal penetration. This "Gettysburg of the West" signaled the abandonment of the state by the Richmond government, which had never been able to provide much assistance to the western border areas.[64] With Confederate resistance in this region dissolving into bloody guerrilla raids and irregular warfare, the Federal troops reached and captured Helena on July 12, prompting the president to appoint another military governor. He chose John S. Phelps, a Connecticut-born War Democrat, at that time a Missouri slaveholder and U. S. congressman, who had led a regiment at the battle of Pea Ridge.[65]

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[63]Cong. Globe, 38 Cong., 2 sess., 1129.

[64]Michael B. Dougan, Confederate Arkansas: The People and Policies of a Frontier State in Wartime (University, Ala., 1976), 87.

[65]Boatner, Civil War Dictionary, 650; Dougan, Confederate Arkansas, 108; McCarthy, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction, 82-83. An earlier attempt to install General Samuel Curtis as a military governor in May, 1862, at Little Rock had aborted when the general failed to reach the appointed destination. Henry W. Halleck to Curtis, May 21, 1862, OR, Ser. 1, XIII, 378; Ruth Caroline Cowen, "Reorganization of Federal Arkansas, 1862-1865," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XVIII (1959), 33n.

Secretary of War Stanton gave the same charge to Phelps that he did to Andrew Johnson, Edward Stanly, and George F. Shepley. The Arkansas military governor was empowered to re-establish to the pre-eminence of Federal authority, maintain the peace and security of its citizens, and aid in the reorganization of a loyal state government.[66] However, the difficulties inherent in administering a provisional government in a border region rendered insecure by almost constant guerrilla warfare and hampered by profound communications and logistical problems were staggering. For most of his undistinguished tenure, Phelps was destined to remain in a St. Louis hotel room, unable to affect the course of events or advance the cause of the Union in Arkansas, becoming a living symbol of the impotence of the military government in his state.

Phelps did not leave for Helena until August 19, 1862. Thereafter, the military governor was able to do little to carry out his instructions other than appointing a few subordinates and writing a number of communications, protesting the inevitable excesses and improper conduct of certain military personnel in his area. Illness soon forced him to return to St. Louis and although he maintained his commission as military governor until July 9, 1863, Phelps' shadowy contribution to the Union cause made no impression on subsequent events.[67]

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[66] Stanton to Phelps, July 19, 1862, OR, Ser. 3, II, 233.

[67] Cowen, "Reorganization of Federal Arkansas," 36-37; McCarthy, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction, 83; Dougan, Confederate Arkansas, 119, 152n.

Upon removing Phelps from the military governorship, Lincoln tried without success to arrange for absentee Senator William K. Sebastian to reclaim his seat on a program of gradual emancipation. However, Sebastian proved unwilling to make the attempt to re-enter the senate, leaving the president without any further options in the state, aside from moral support and military operations. Thereafter Lincoln placed state reconstruction on an amnesty basis, which he had outlined to Congress in his annual message, December 8, 1863.[68] Still, not having an established Union leader who could mobilize the loyalist sentiment created some real problems of direction, procedure, and form for the president.

Seeking to encourage Unionism and promote disaffection in the rebel citizenry, Lincoln pardoned Edward W. Gantt, a Breckinridge Democrat and political opportunist, who had been elected to both the Federal and Confederate congresses.[69] Despite his lack of a real constituency, Gantt and several other self-appointed delegates went to Washington to persuade the president to authorize an election for governor. Unaware that another loyalist faction had already called a convention at the capital for early January, 1864, to revise the constitution to eliminate slavery, revoke the ordinance of secession, and elect a provisional governor, Lincoln sent Gantt and

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[68]The ambivalent Sebastian had given up his seat when Arkansas seceded but Union supporters believed that he would be allowed to reclaim his seat. Cowen, "Reorganization of Federal Arkansas," 37-40.

[69]Dougan, Confederate Arkansas, 14, 33, 66, 110-11. In the closing days of the war, Gantt embraced the Union and repudiated slavery.

his compatriots back to Arkansas with instructions to establish a civil government.[70] Chagrined when he learned that his orders were in conflict with plans already in motion at Little Rock, the president advised General Steele to ignore his instructions which had been relayed by the Gantt delegation. "Of all things, avoid if possible, a dividing into cliques among the friends of the common object," he counseled.[71]

On March 14, 1864, the election was held as scheduled by the Little Rock convention. Like the self-appointed convention, the election was characterized by many irregularities and variations in procedures. The convention had already selected Isaac Murphy, a teacher-turned-lawyer-and-soldier, as governor, and various other state officials, including a legislature. In addition, the voters selected three representatives, leaving the legislature the task of selecting the U. S. senators. When the legislature responded by choosing two senators, Lincoln's reconstruction plans had essentially been completed. There remained only the final step of recognition from the Congress. When the Arkansas delegation presented their credentials in the spring of 1864 and again in the next session during the winter of 1865, the congressional radicals mobilized their forces and thwarted the president's plans to have the Arkansans seated. In the view of Charles Sumner and his fellow travelers,

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[70] Cowen, "Reorganization of Federal Arkansas," 45-46.

[71] Lincoln to Frederick Steele, January 30, 1864, Basler, Works of Lincoln, VII, 161.

Arkansas still lacked a legal government and remained in a state of rebellion. Notwithstanding the legalities of state governments and electoral procedures, Arkansas' votes were still counted when the Federal proclamation of December 18, 1865, decreed that the Thirteenth Amendment had been accepted by the required three-fourths of the states and was therefore in force.[72]

On one level Lincoln's experimentation with military governments in the four states where they were seriously implemented may be judged as a useful exercise. In the case of Tennessee and, to some extent, Louisiana, the administrations thus established helped nurture the flickering flame of Unionism and served to provide a mechanism for the restoration of local governmental services, courts, electoral machinery, and the other paraphernalia of public governance. Yet, on another level, the military governments seemed to accelerate the momentum toward the very conflict that the president wished to avoid: the collision between the White House and the Congress over the control of reconstruction. The credibility of the president's restoration policies was not elevated by the constant dispute with the radicals over the credentials of the various individuals presenting themselves for admission to Congress throughout the war. Nor does Lincoln, himself, appear to have gained stature by the logic upon which he apparently based his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction. In this plan, the president apparently believed that individuals, who earlier had been willing to risk their lives

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[72]Cowen, "Reorganization of Federal Arkansas," 48-57.

and future to oppose him and his political ideals, would peacefully lay down their arms, embrace old political adversaries, and abandon a racial, cultural, and economic system deeply embedded in their very history. This presumption underlay his experiments with military governments and would be formalized in his historic December, 1863, message to Congress. The weakness of this proposition far more than the particular skills and competencies of the various individuals, including Andrew Johnson, account for the difficulties encountered by the provisional governments. In a larger sense, the problems that were associated with the military governments, and the reaction of the congressional radicals to them, anticipate the conflict later to emerge when Andrew Johnson picked up the torch from the fallen Lincoln. Nevertheless in his performance as military governor, the Greeneville tailor-politician had reason for some genuine pride.

More than any of his contemporaries in the other provisional arrangements, Andrew Johnson came closest to success. That his efforts would fail to satisfy the accumulated grievances of a generation of Tennesseans cast into adversarial roles was a foregone conclusion. He had been given the task of making brick without straw. Unable to depend on the military commanders to protect the fragmented Union constituency, he harassed generals, badgered the president, agitated the war department, and caused heads to roll. His sceptre was barren, but ultimately, he would have his way to the fullest extent that the Lincoln administration could practically allow. In the final analysis, the successful generals were those who learned to please the military governor of Tennessee. Even the

president surely recognized that his own future political career depended on keeping Andrew Johnson in his camp.

Before he turned his face toward Washington, the Tennessean had some valid cause for self-congratulation. Where there had been rebellion, "the vindicated majesty of the law" now prevailed. Where slavery once mocked humanity, the freedmen now dreamed of wages, schools, and the ephemeral "forty acres and a mule." Where treason and disunion flourished, the solemn covenant of the Union had been restored. That he realized that the victory had not been complete, and much work remained undone, was clear from his earnest efforts to remain in place until his ancient adversary and now political ally, Parson Brownlow, was firmly installed in power. However, the president was adamant, and reluctantly the Tennessee patriot boarded the train for Washington and an uncertain destiny. Ahead lay still greater difficulties, the unresolved issues of reconstruction and restoration. He had been ill when he left. Away in Washington waited his solicitous friends and, according to protocol, his inaugural escort, Vice President Hannibal Hamlin, who, courteously, stood ready to launch him into the headlines with a vengeful glass of brandy.

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